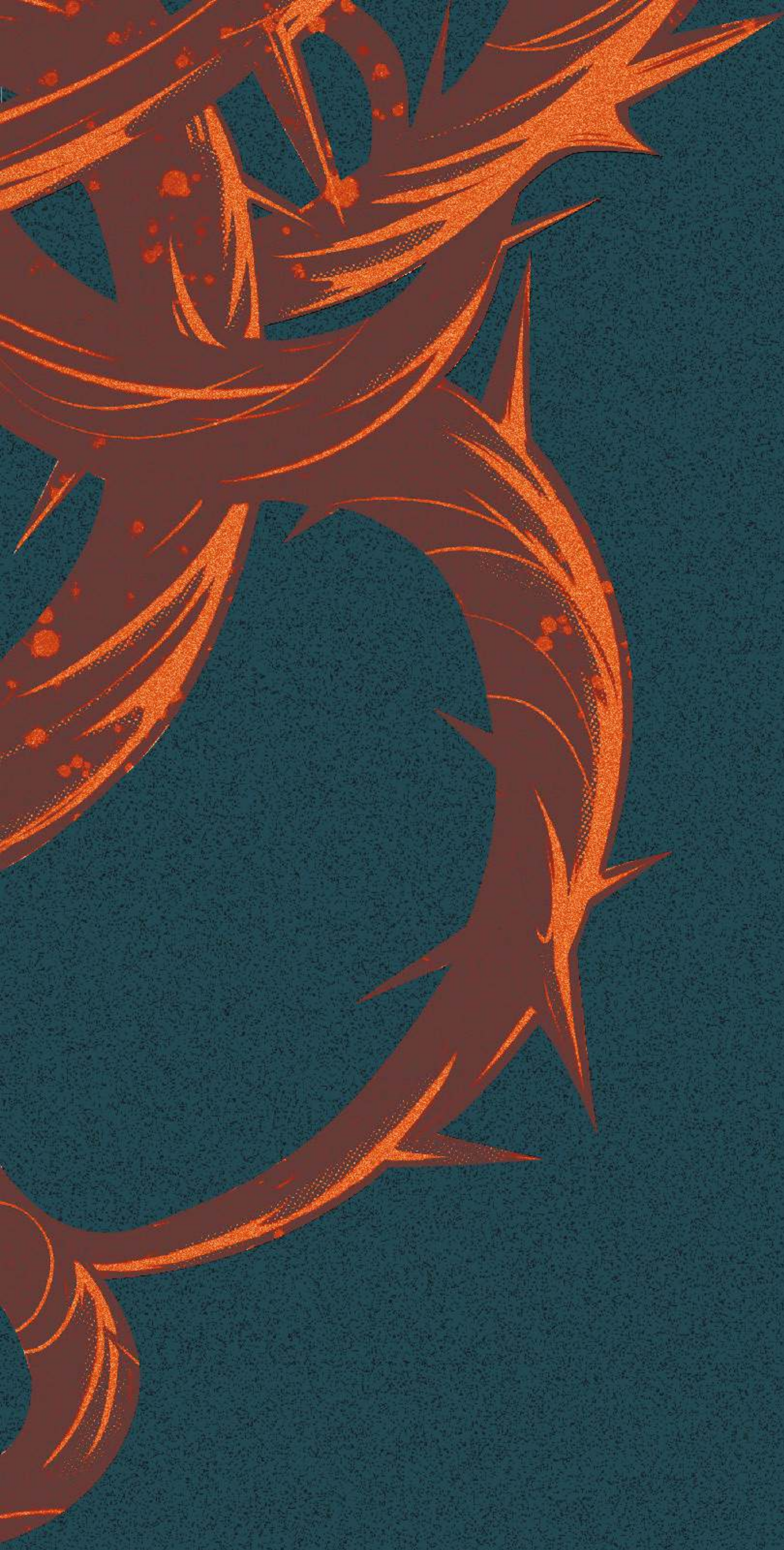
REV∃RSAL™

ALEX DE CAMPI
KELLY FITZPATRICK

SKYLAR PATRIDGE
HASSAN OTSMANE-ELHAOU



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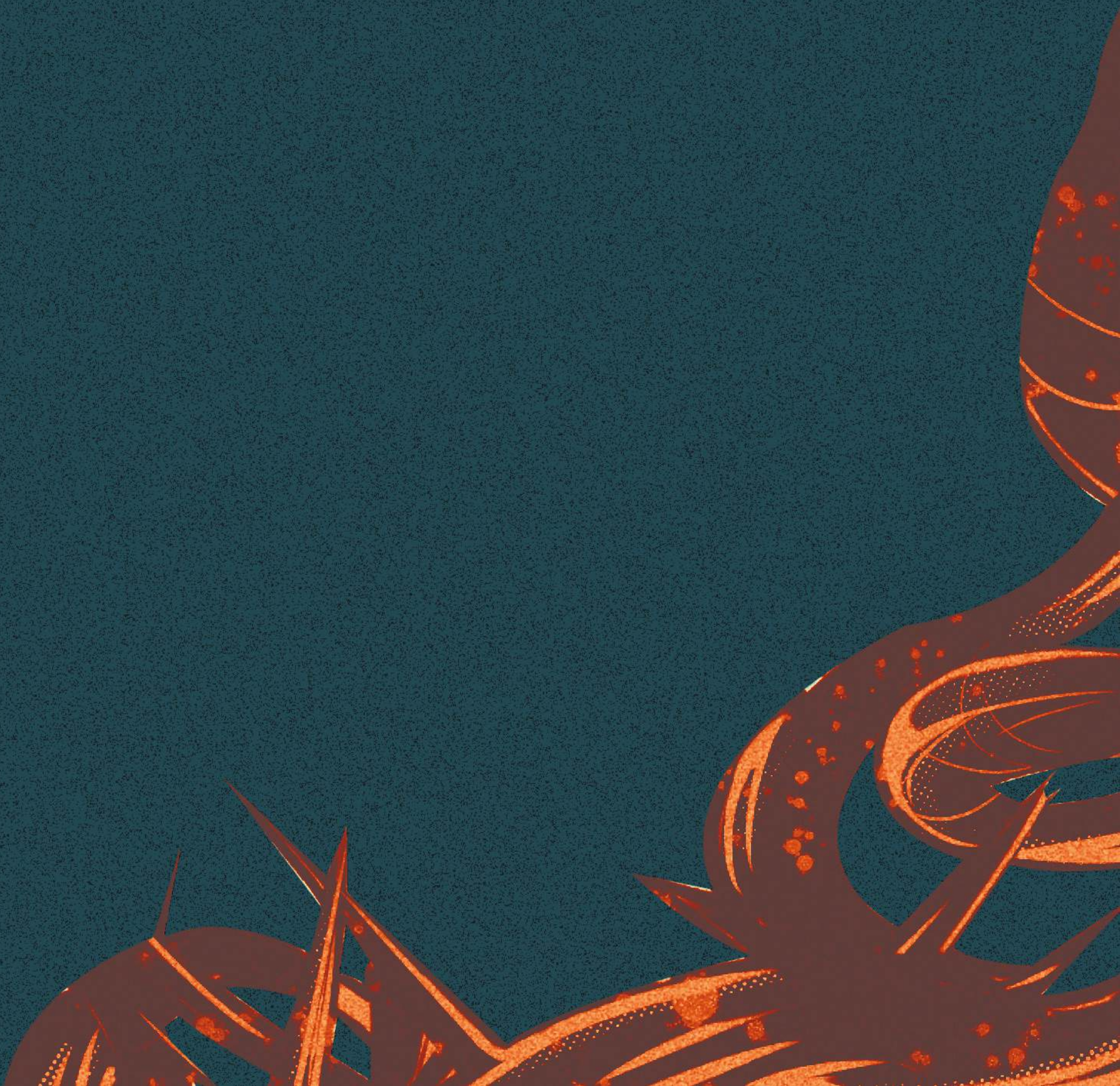

REVERSAL™

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REVERSAL

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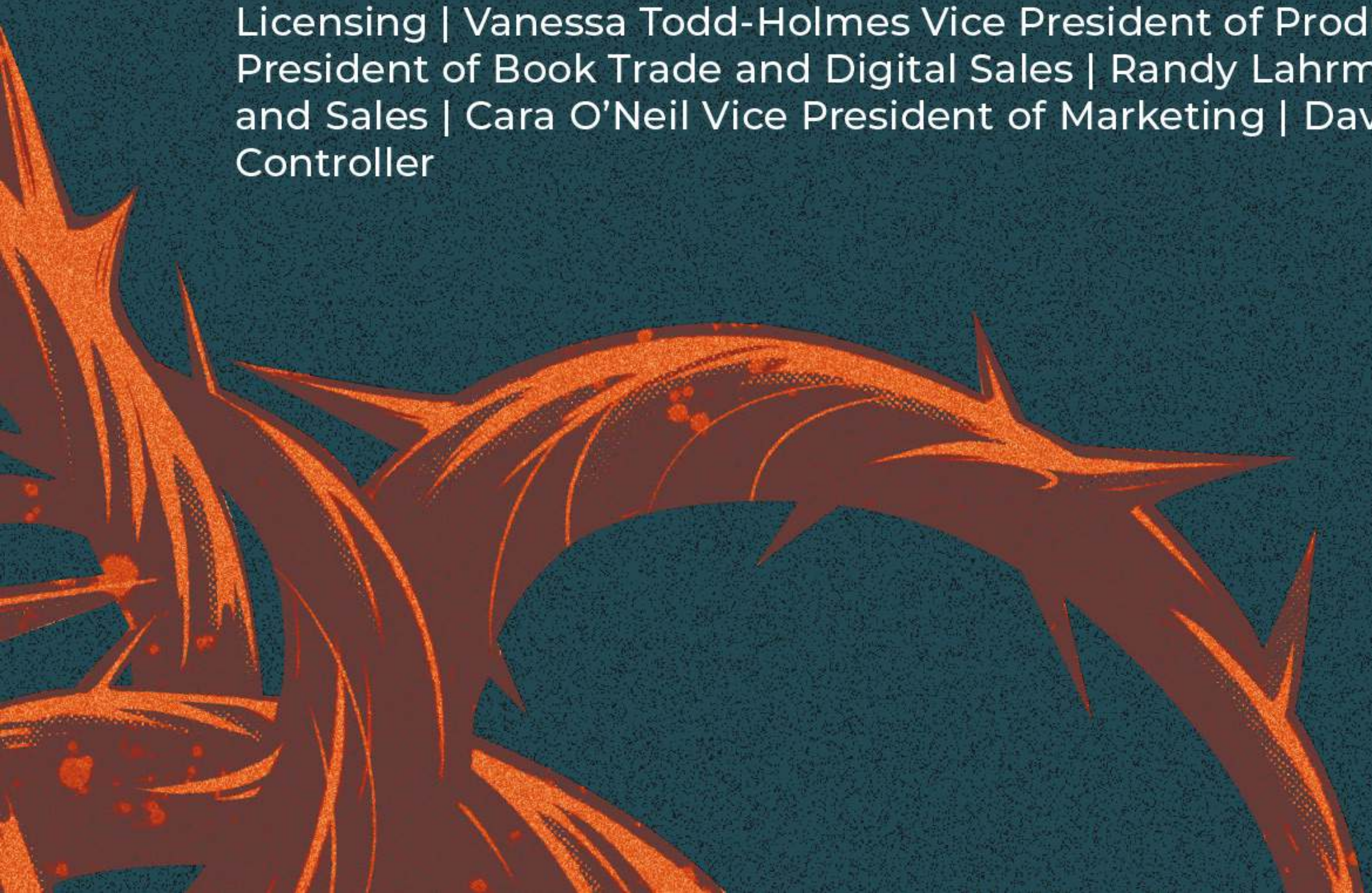

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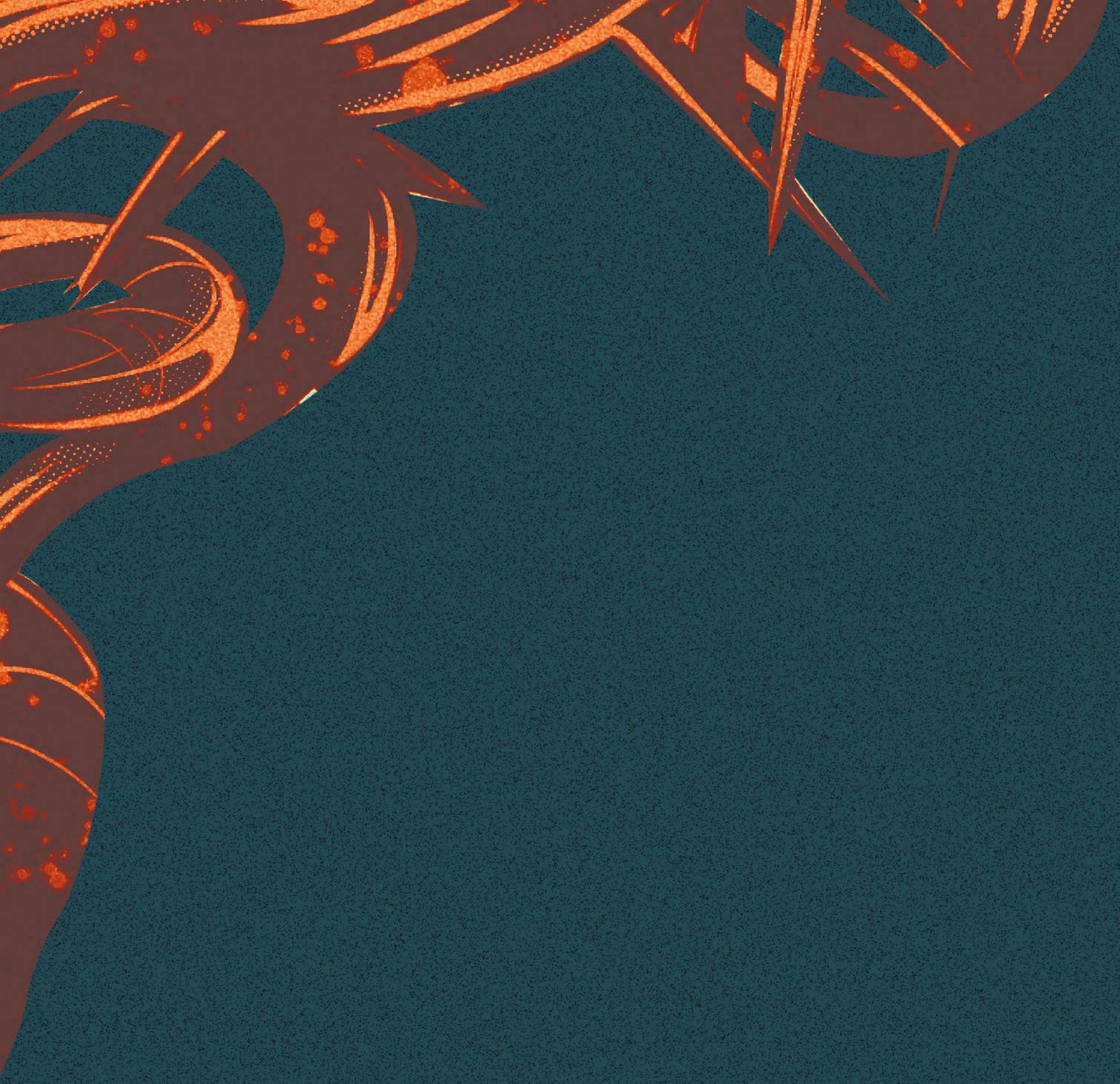
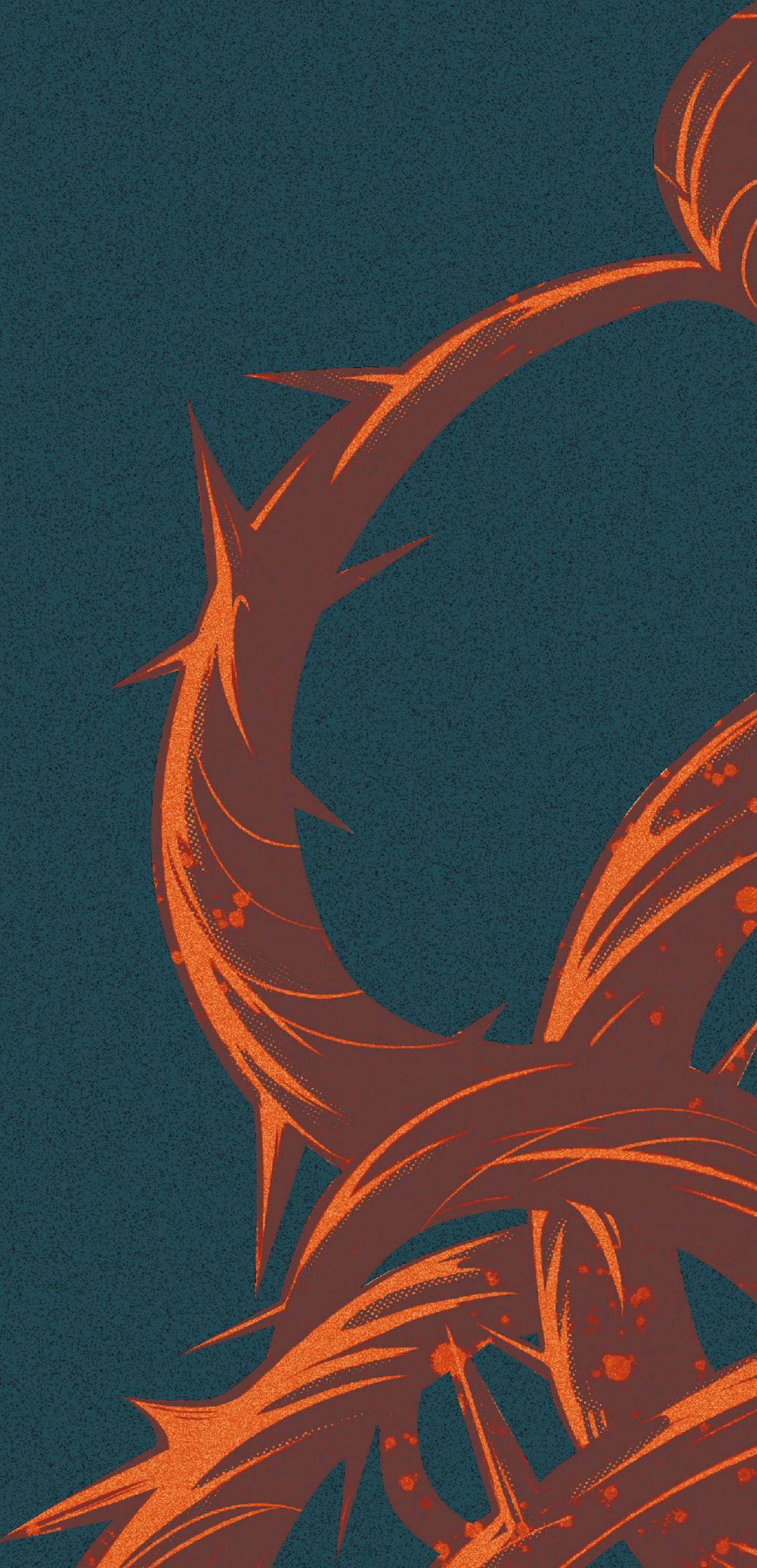
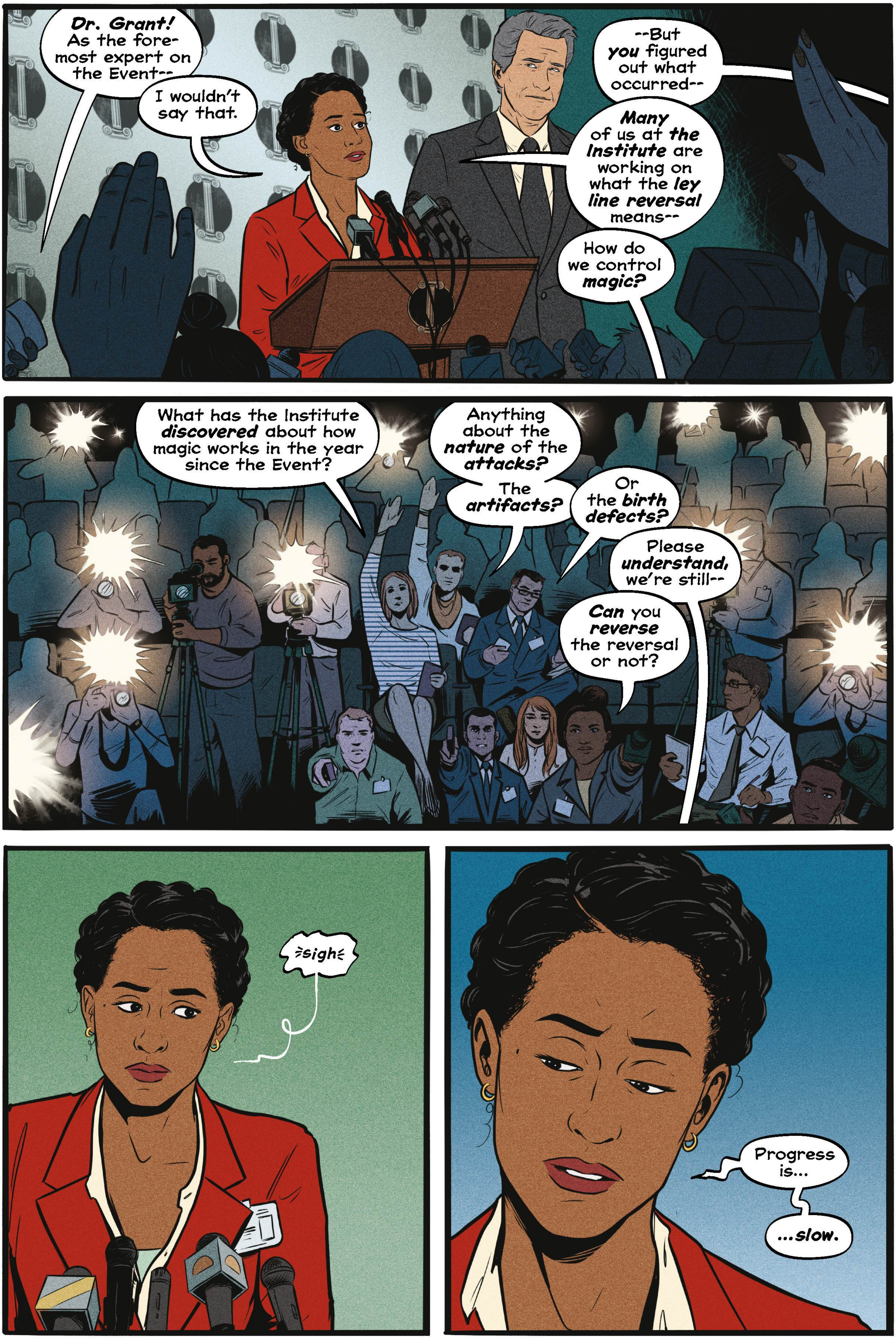
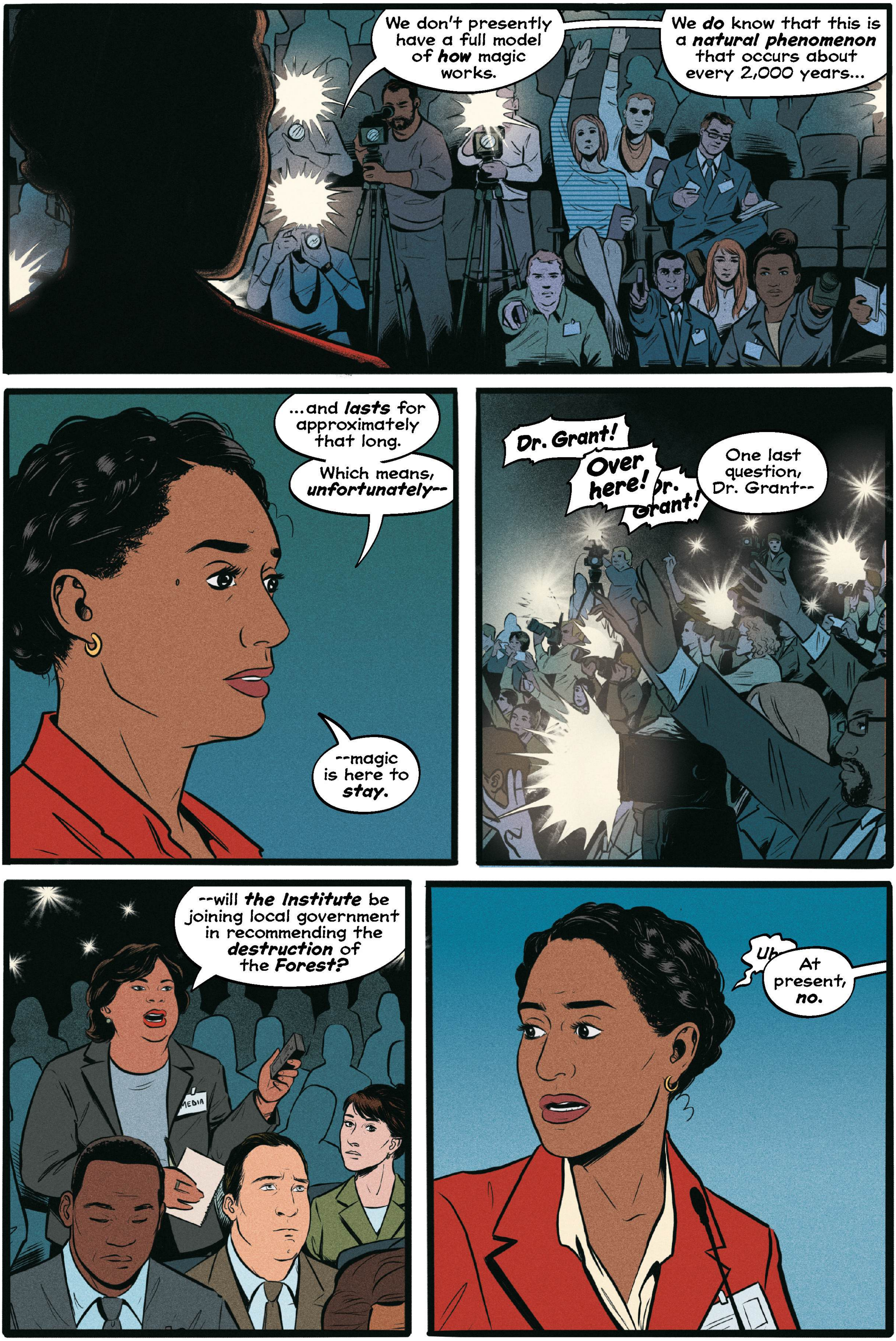
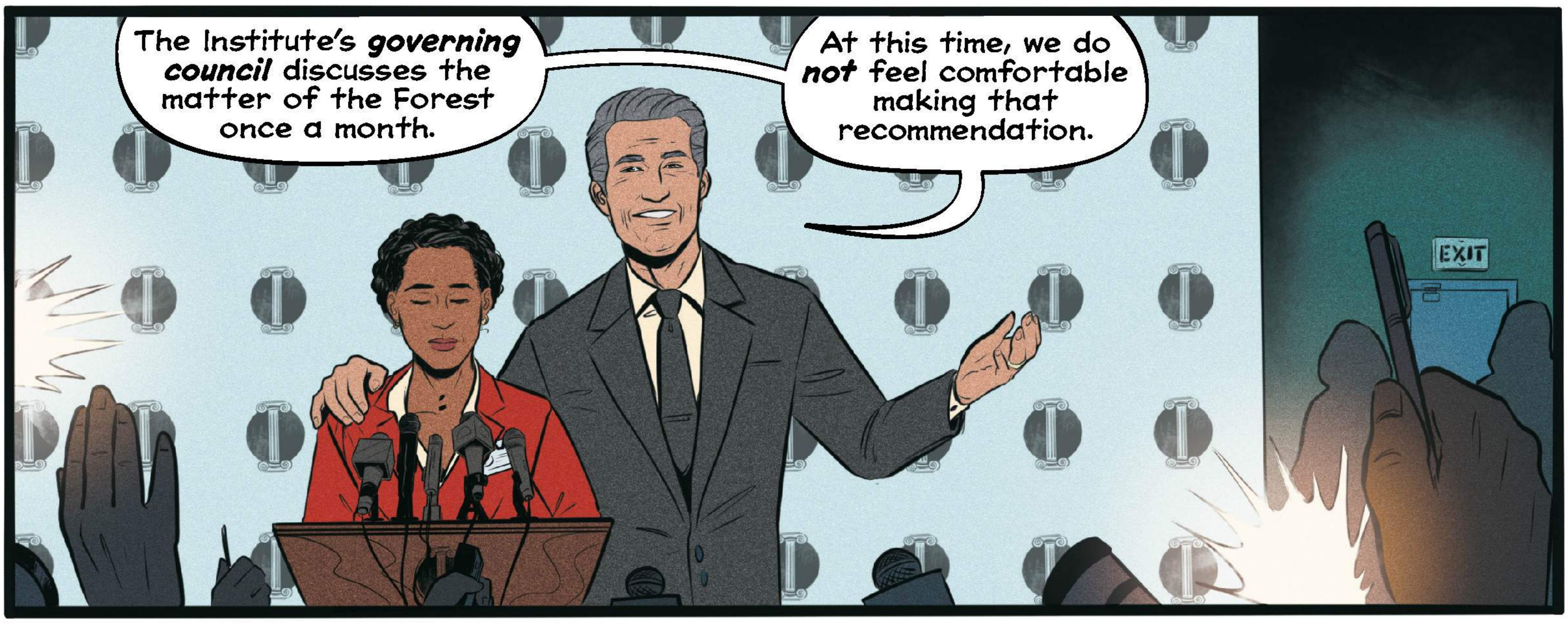
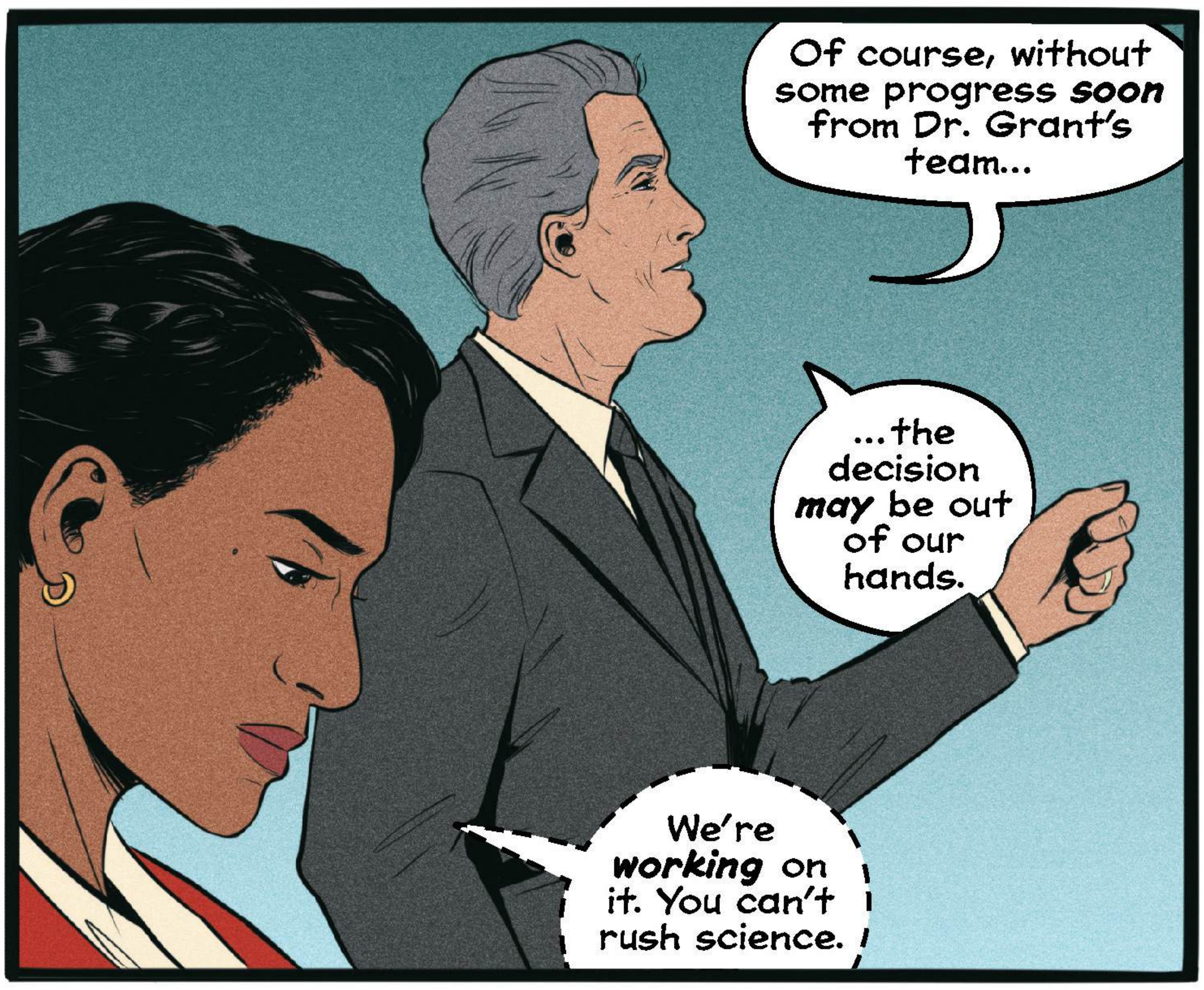


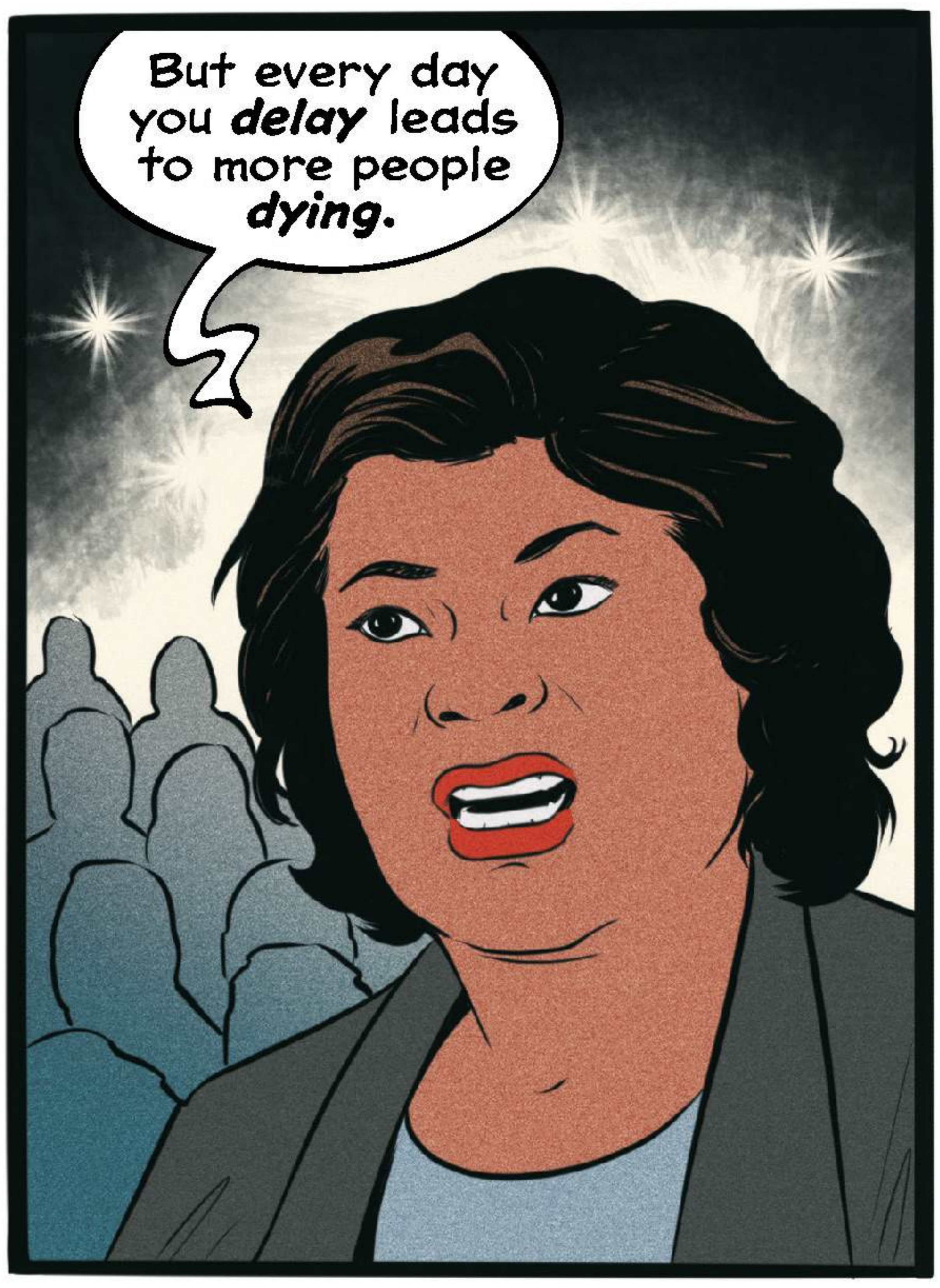


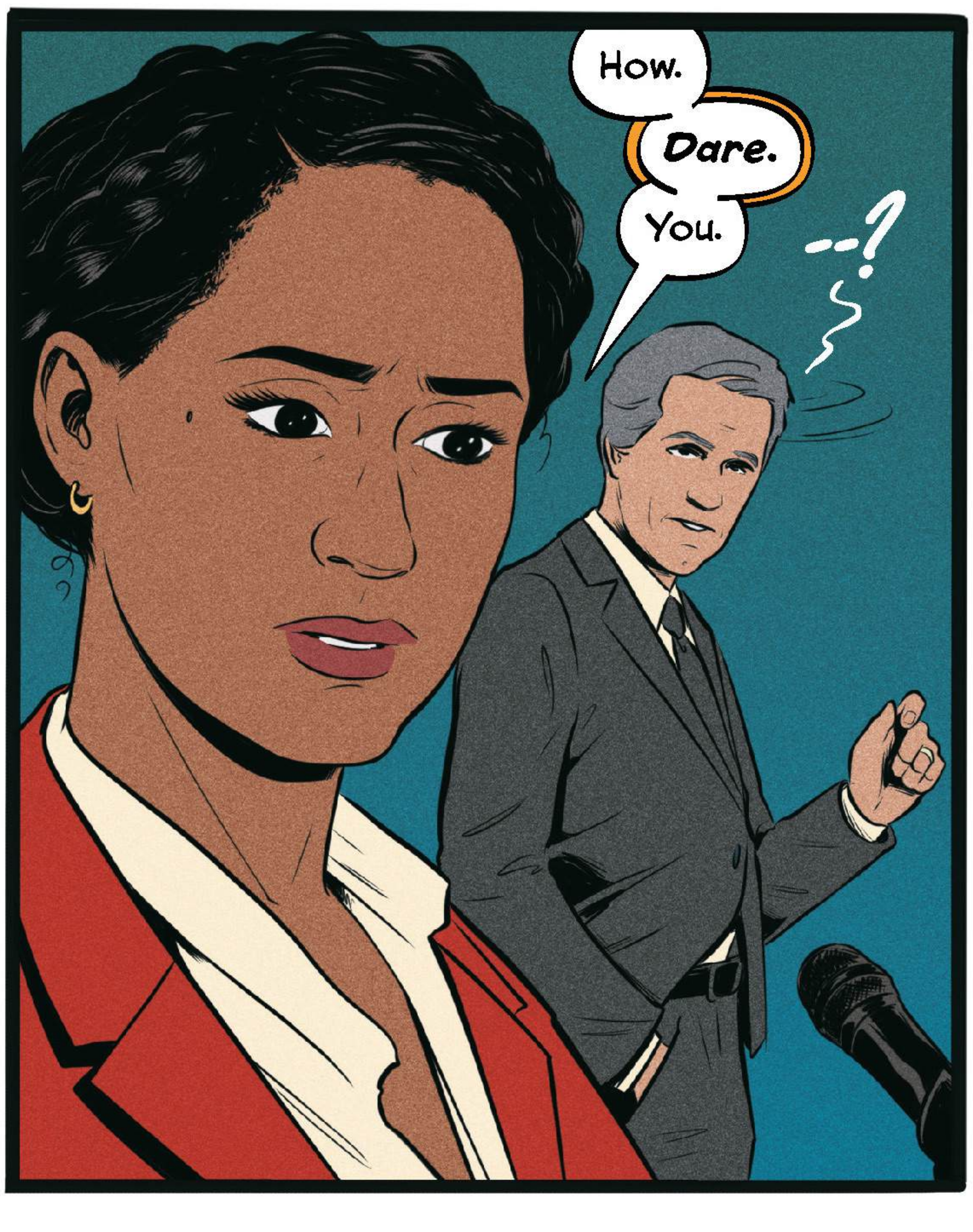

Dr. Grant! As the foremost expert on the Event--
I wouldn't say that.
--But you figured out what occurred--
Many of us at the Institute are working on what the ley line reversal means--
How do we control magic?
What has the Institute discovered about how magic works in the year since the Event?
Anything about the nature of the attacks?
The artifacts?
Or the birth defects?
Please understand, we're still--
Can you reverse the reversal or not?
sigh
Progress is...
...slow.

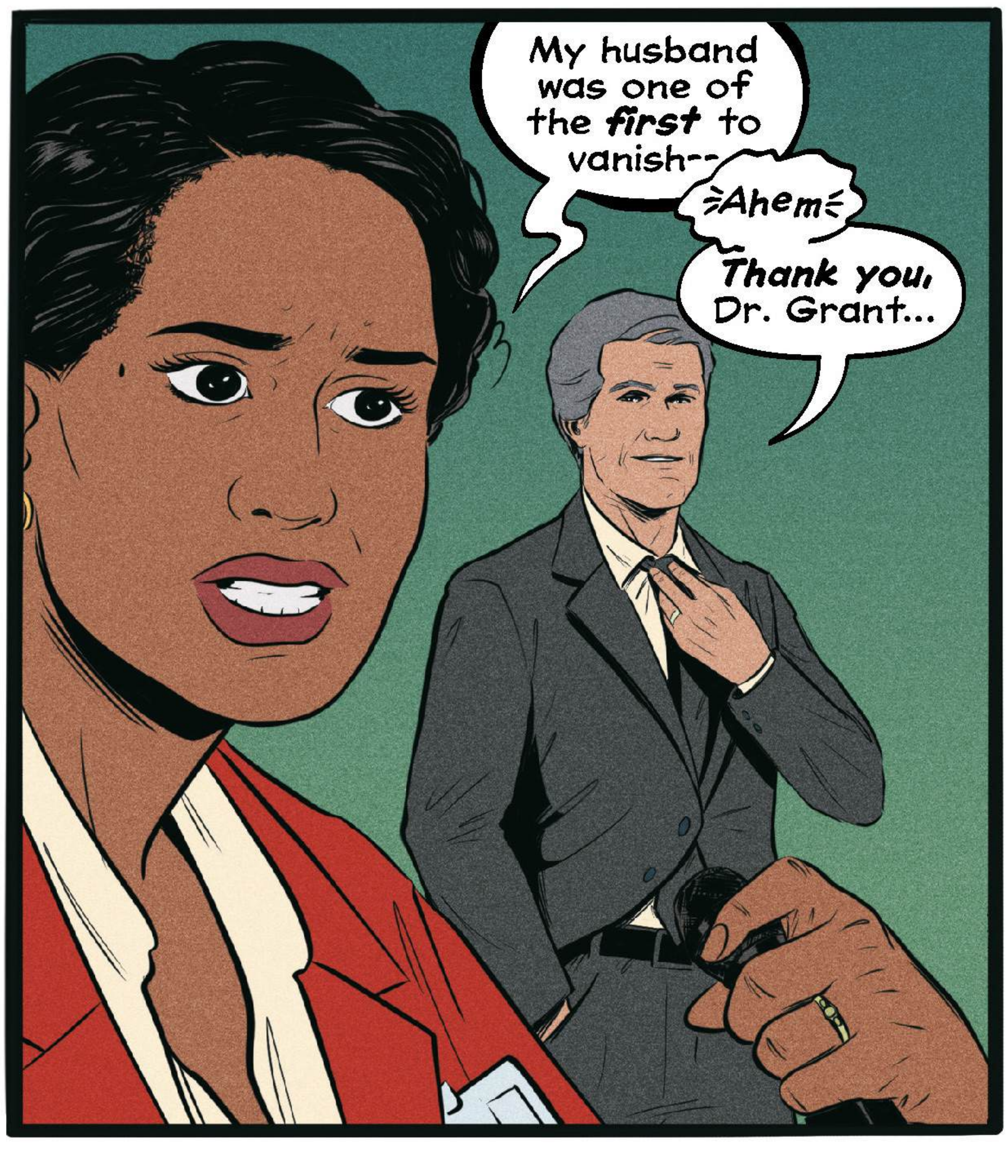

We don't presently have a full model of *how* magic works.
We *do* know that this is a *natural phenomenon* that occurs about every 2,000 years...
...and *lasts* for approximately that long.
Which means, *unfortunately*--
--magic is here to *stay*.
Dr. Grant!
Over here!
Dr. Grant!
One last question, Dr. Grant--
--will *the Institute* be joining local government in recommending the *destruction* of the *Forest?*
MEDIA
Uh
At present, *no.*

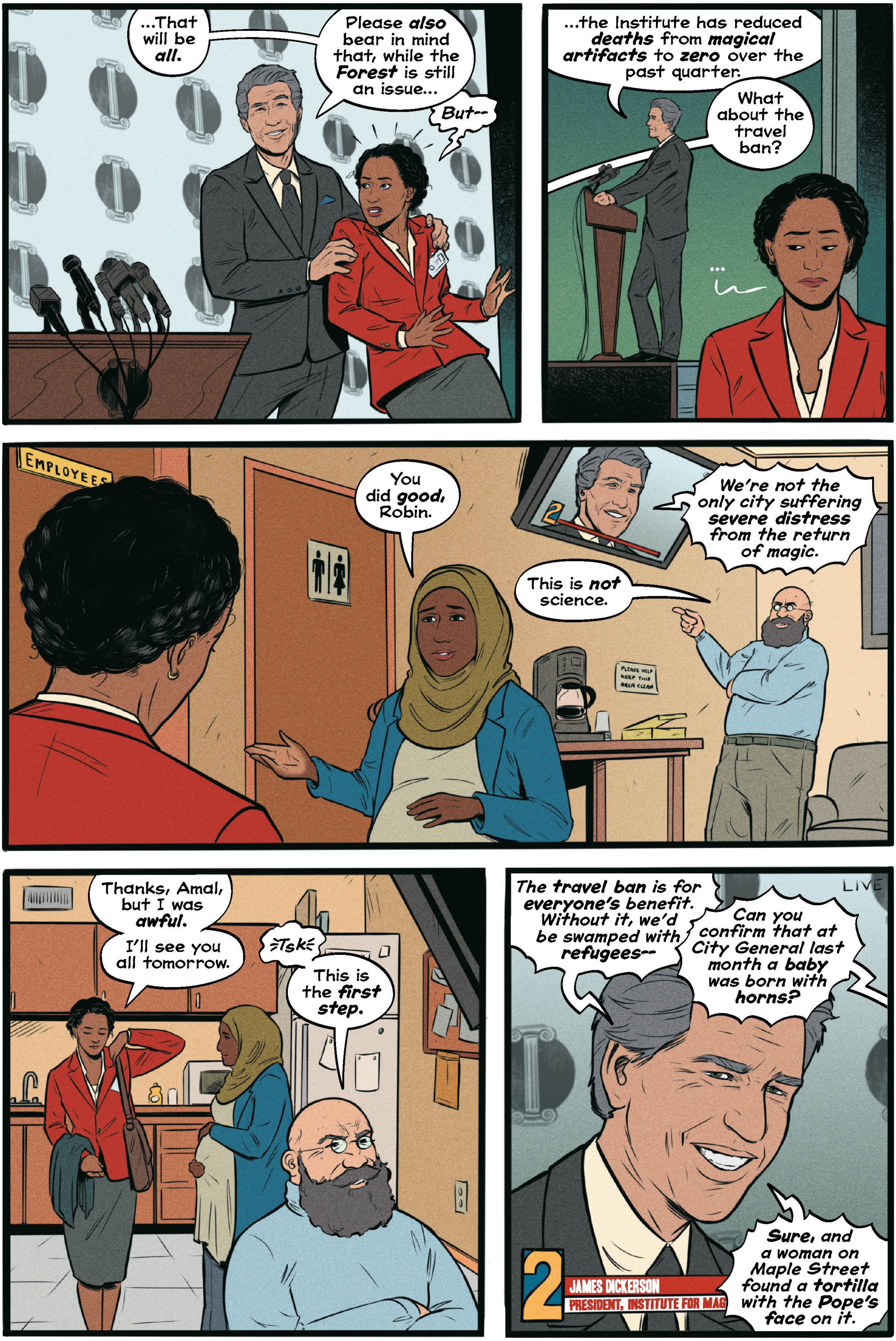

The Institute's **governing council** discusses the matter of the Forest once a month.
At this time, we do **not** feel comfortable making that recommendation.
EXIT

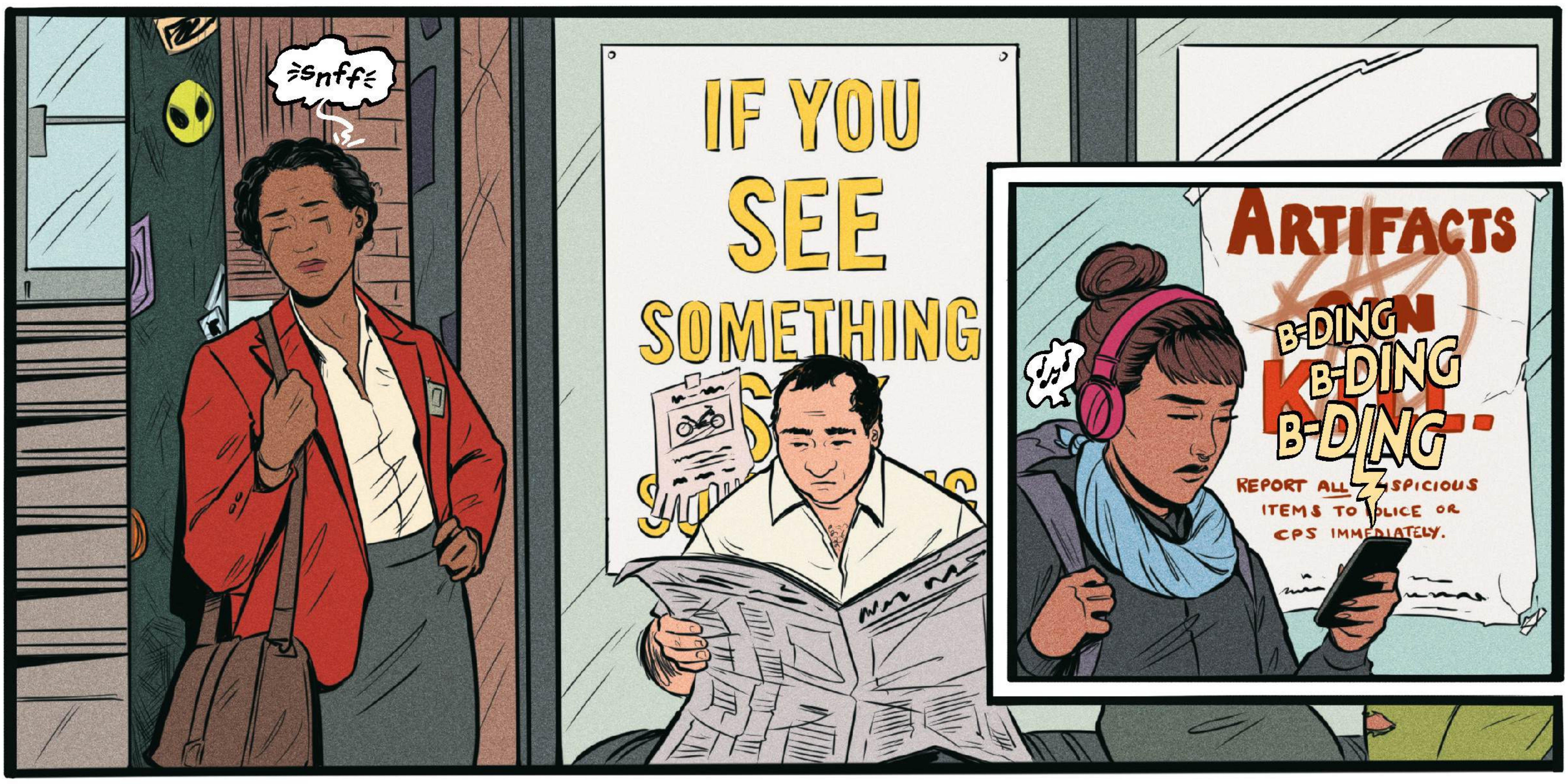

Of course, without some progress **soon** from Dr. Grant's team...
...the decision **may** be out of our hands.
We're **working** on it. You can't rush science.

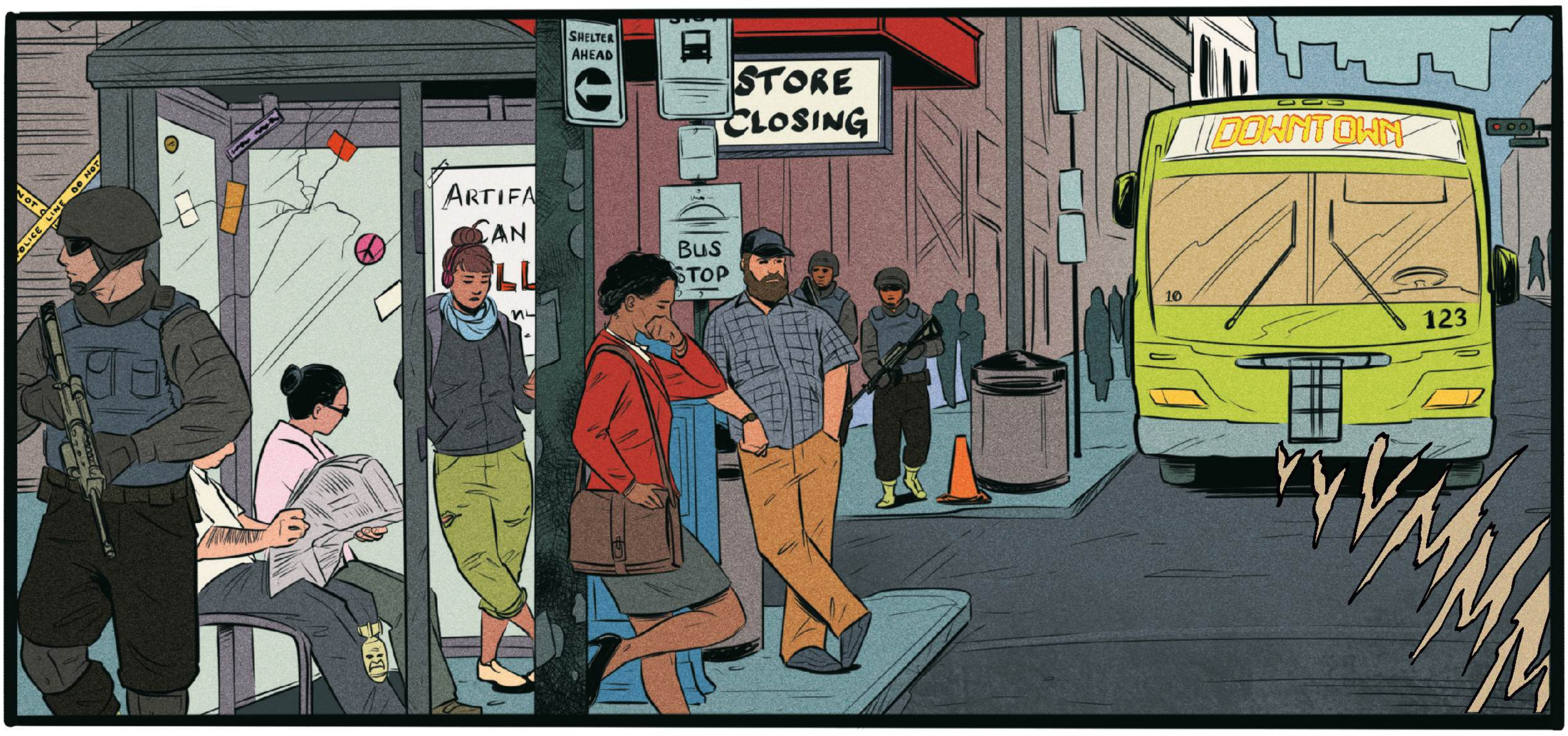

But every day you **delay** leads to more people **dying.**

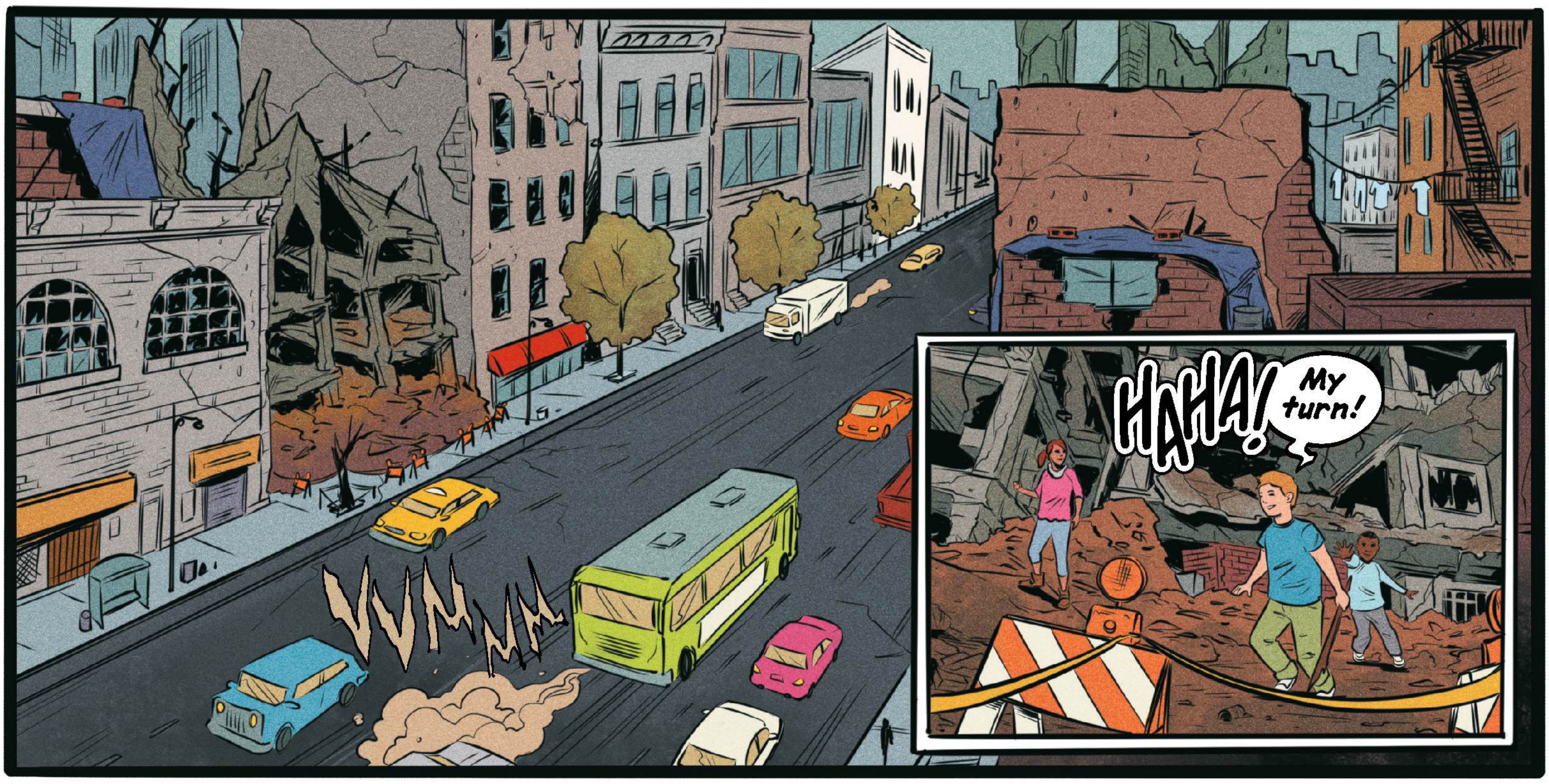

How.
Dare.
You.
--?


My husband was one of the **first** to vanish--
Ahem
Thank you, Dr. Grant...

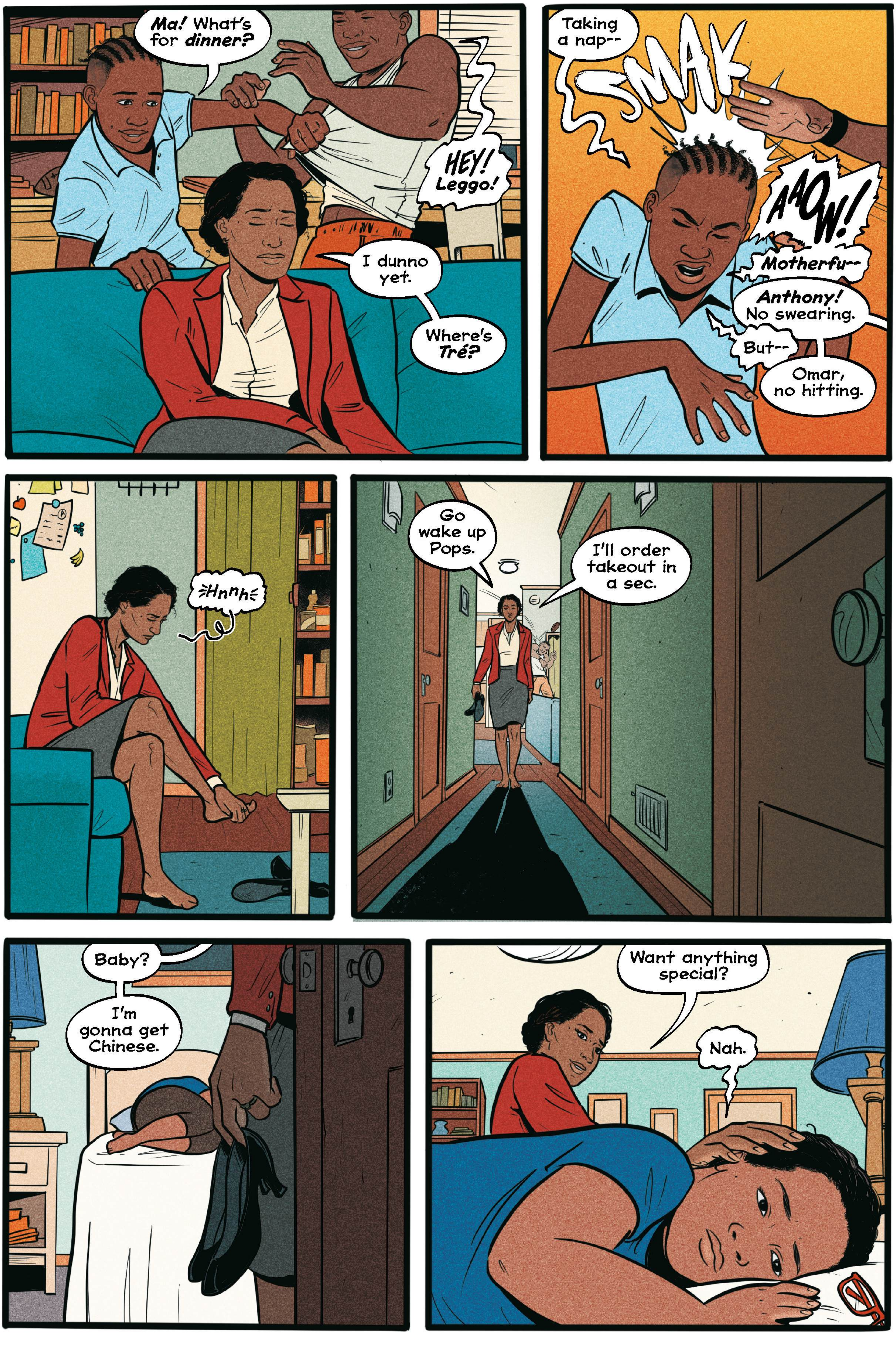

...That will be **all.**
Please **also** bear in mind that, while the **Forest** is still an issue...
But--
...the Institute has reduced **deaths** from **magical artifacts** to **zero** over the past quarter.
What about the travel ban?
...
EMPLOYEES
You did **good,** Robin.
2
We're not the only city suffering **severe distress** from the return of magic.
This is **not** science.
PLEASE HELP KEEP THIS AREA CLEAN
Thanks, Amal, but I was **awful.**
I'll see you all tomorrow.
Tsk
This is the **first step.**
LIVE
The **travel ban** is for **everyone's** benefit. Without it, we'd be swamped with **refugees--**
Can you confirm that at City General last month a **baby** was born with **horns?**
2
JAMES DICKERSON
PRESIDENT, INSTITUTE FOR MAG
Sure, and a woman on Maple Street found a **tortilla** with the **Pope's** face on it.

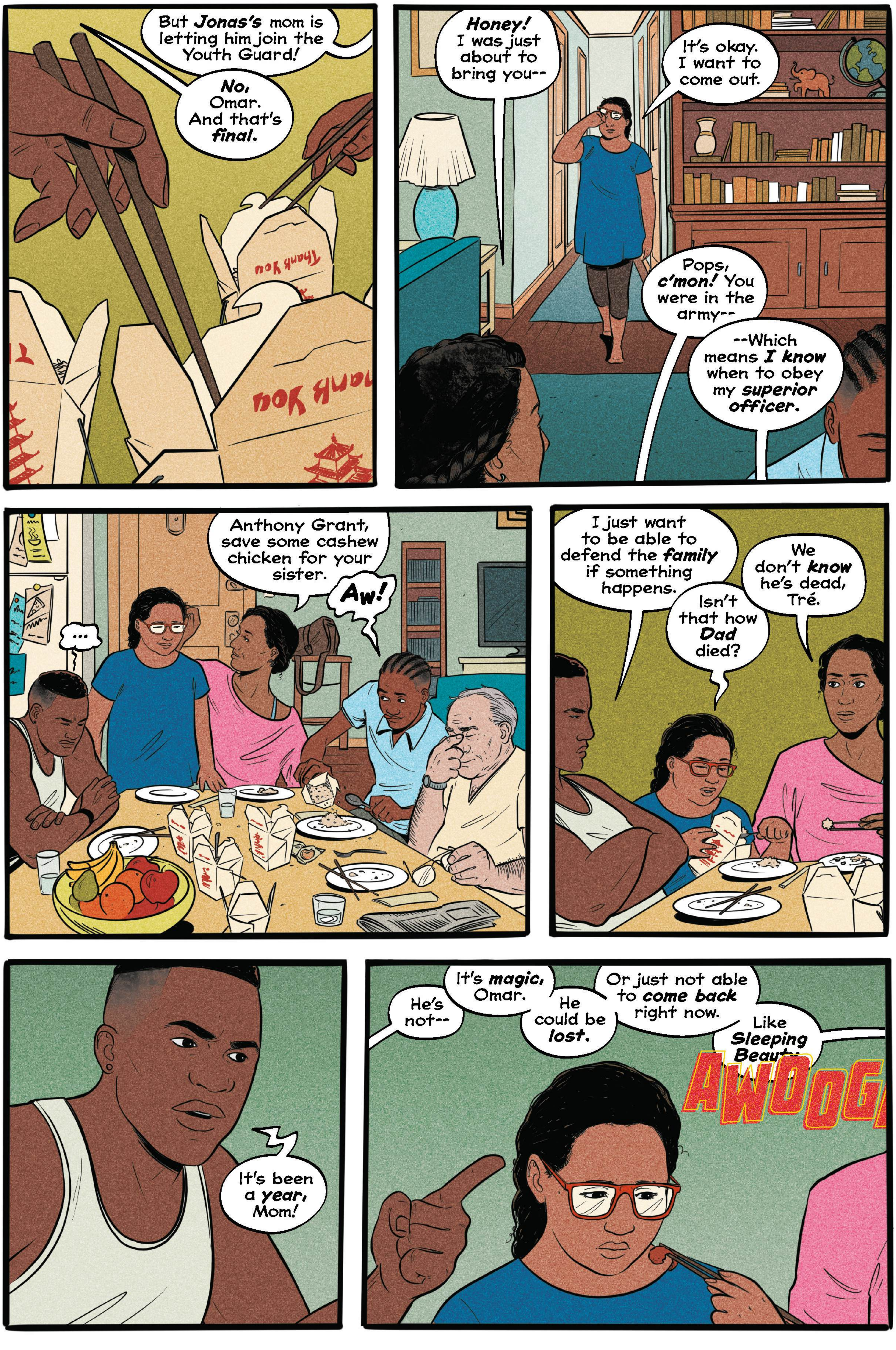

snff
IF YOU SEE SOMETHING
ARTIFACTS
B-DING B-DING B-DING
REPORT ALL SPICIOUS ITEMS TO LICE OR CPS IMMEDIATELY.

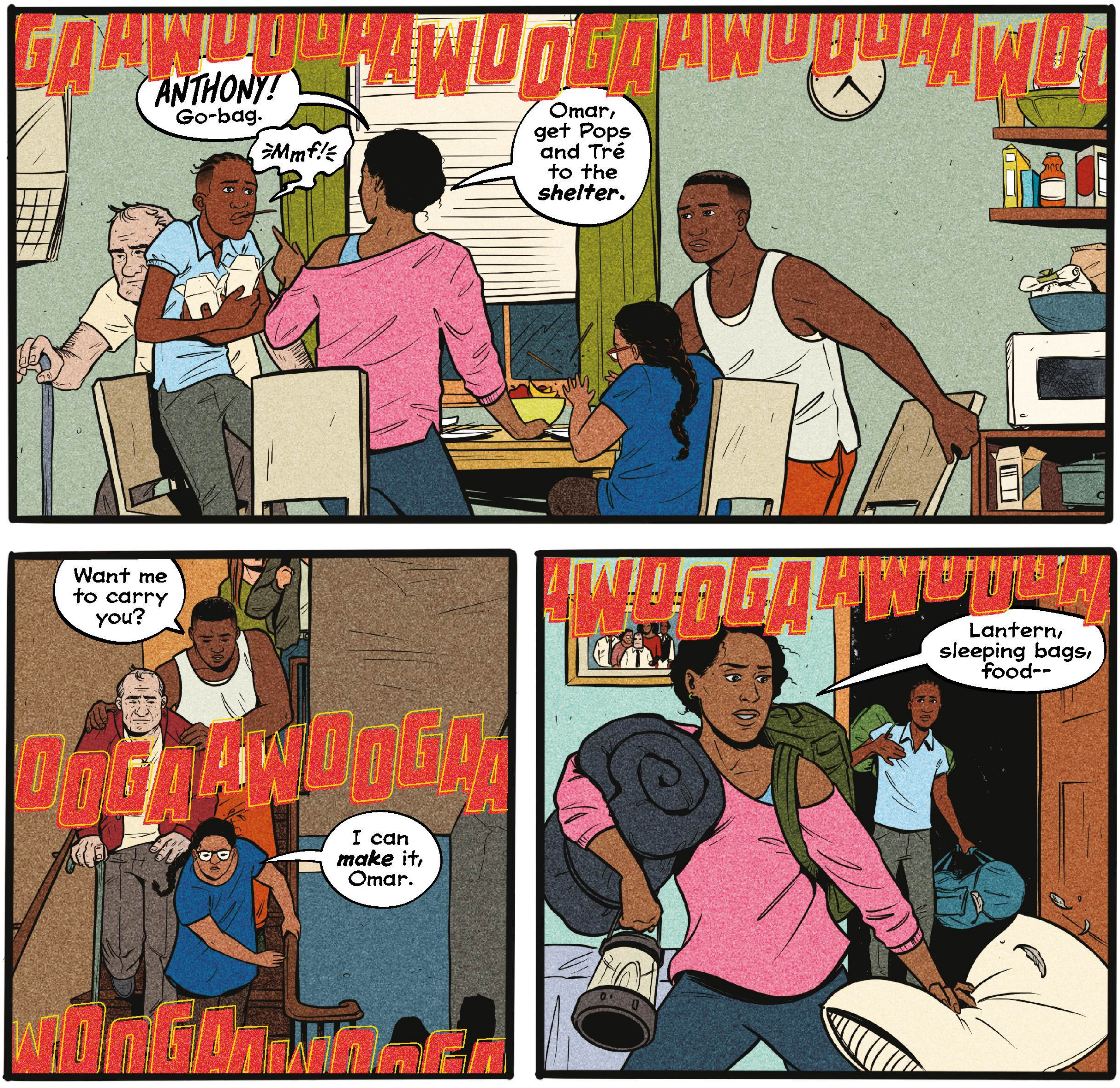

SHELTER AHEAD
STORE CLOSING
BUS STOP
ARTIFA CAN LL
DOWNTOWN
10
123
VVMMM


VVMMM
HAHA!
My turn!

VVMMMMMMMMMMMN
MMMMMMN
VVMMMMMMMMMMMN
MAGIC SHELTER
WATCH STEP
SHELTER
REPO
A
ARTI
ANYTHING HELPS GOD BLESS
MMMMMMN
VVMMI
KIDS!
Pops!
I'm home.
KLUNK


Ma! What's for dinner?
HEY! Leggo!
I dunno yet.
Where's Tré?
Taking a nap--
SMAK
AAOW!
Motherfu--
Anthony! No swearing.
But--
Omar, no hitting.
Hnnh
Go wake up Pops.
I'll order takeout in a sec.
Baby?
I'm gonna get Chinese.
Want anything special?
Nah.


But Jonas's mom is letting him join the Youth Guard!
No, Omar. And that's final.
Thank You
Thank You
Honey! I was just about to bring you--
It's okay. I want to come out.
Pops, c'mon! You were in the army--
--Which means I know when to obey my superior officer.
...
Anthony Grant, save some cashew chicken for your sister.
Aw!
I just want to be able to defend the family if something happens.
Isn't that how Dad died?
We don't know he's dead, Tré.
It's been a year, Mom!
He's not--
It's magic, Omar.
He could be lost.
Or just not able to come back right now.
Like Sleeping Beauty
AWOOG


GAAWOOGAAWOOGAAWOOGAAWOO
ANTHONY! Go-bag.
Mmf!
Omar, get Pops and Tré to the *shelter*.
Want me to carry you?
OOGAAWOOGAA
I can *make* it, Omar.
WOOGAAWOOGA
AWOOGAAWOOGA
Lantern, sleeping bags, food--
MAGIC SHELTER
AWOOGAAWOOGAAWOOG
TRÉ! Come on!
AAWOOG

MAGIC
WAAA! WAAA! WAAA!
WAA! WAA!
Shhh! Shhh! Honey--
Did you check her *diaper?*
Oh! The *diaper bag!*
WAA! WAA! WAA
I'm *sorry,* baby.
For what?
For *everything.* For us being here.
I *like* it here.
TOOOM

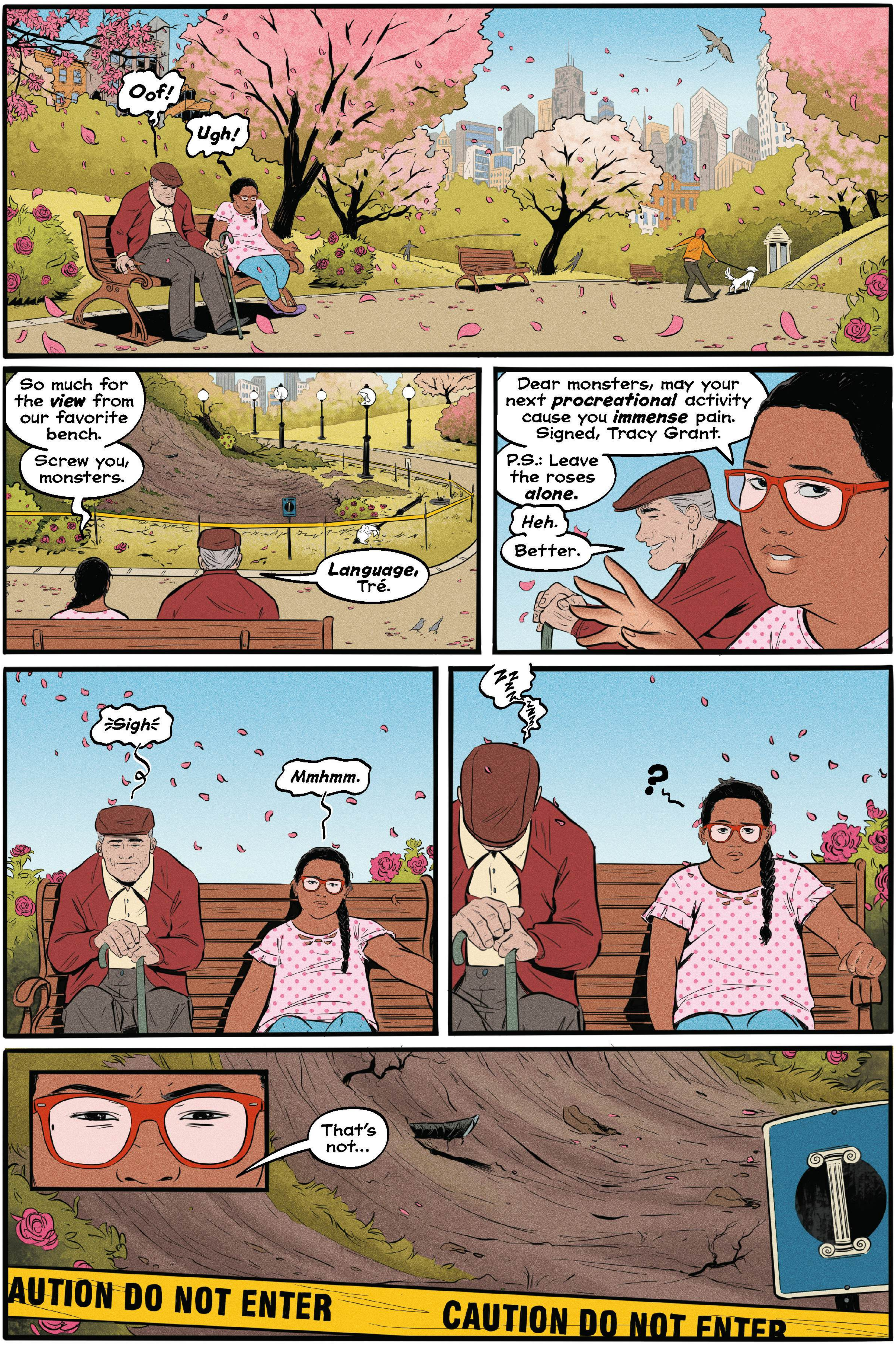
HWA! HWA! WUH--WUH
Shhh! It's okay.
I feel like... there are miracles all around us.
Like we're lucky, in a way.
Mmhmm.
Now if those miracles would just stop trying to kill us...
Ohmigod, right? We're desperate to transfer out of here.
WUH--HWUH--WUH~
Until they do something about the Forest, this is no place to raise a child.
Yes.
Well.
Tomorrow's another day. Maybe things will be different.

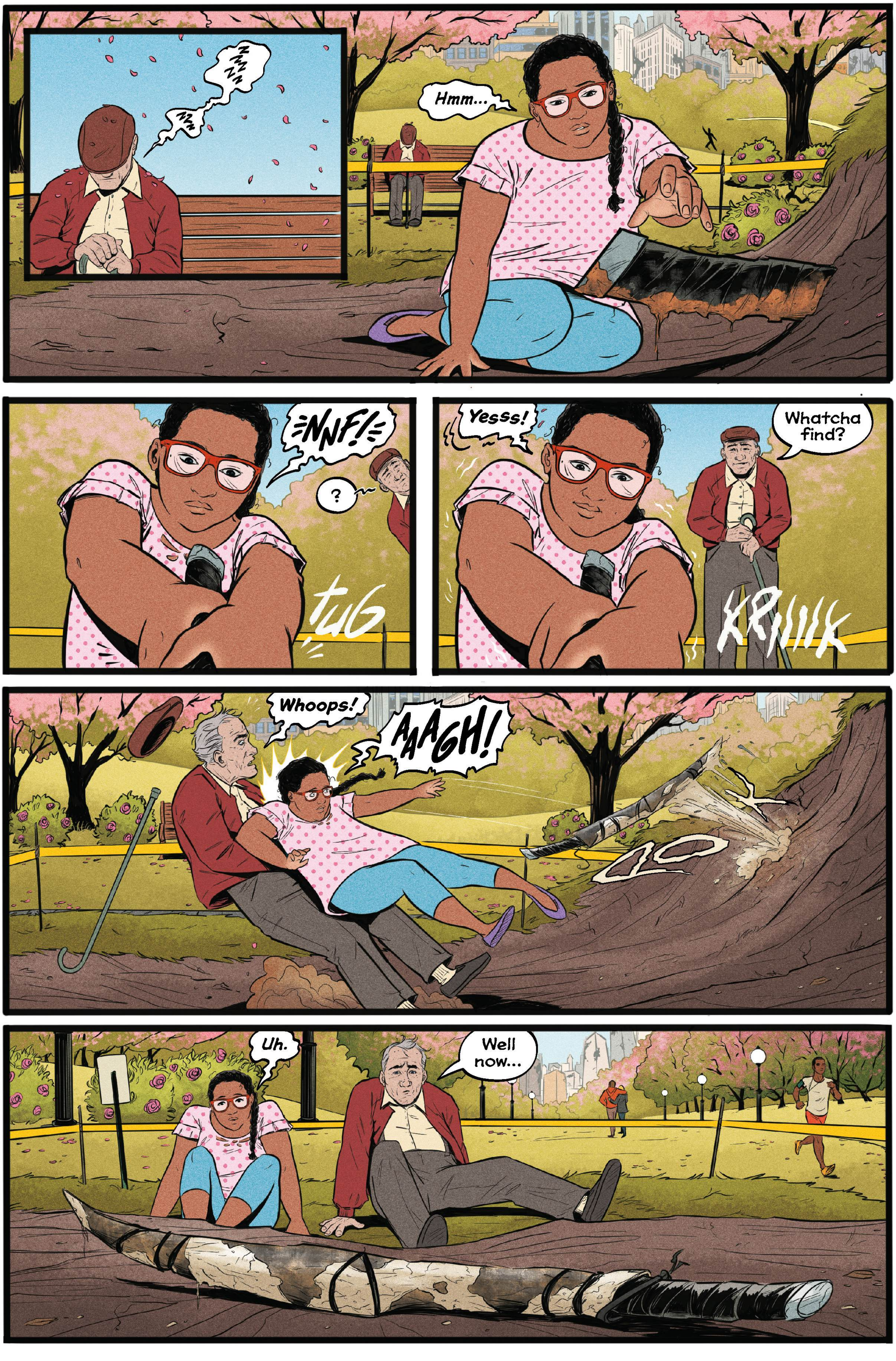
I'm sorry, ma'am, the area's **not secure** for civilians.
We **live** on this street. Do you have **any idea** when--
We don't have an estimate yet.
Sigh
We're gonna have to cut that **wing** off.
Call a **second truck,** Rafi.
CAUTION DO NOT CROSS CAUTION DO NOT CROSS

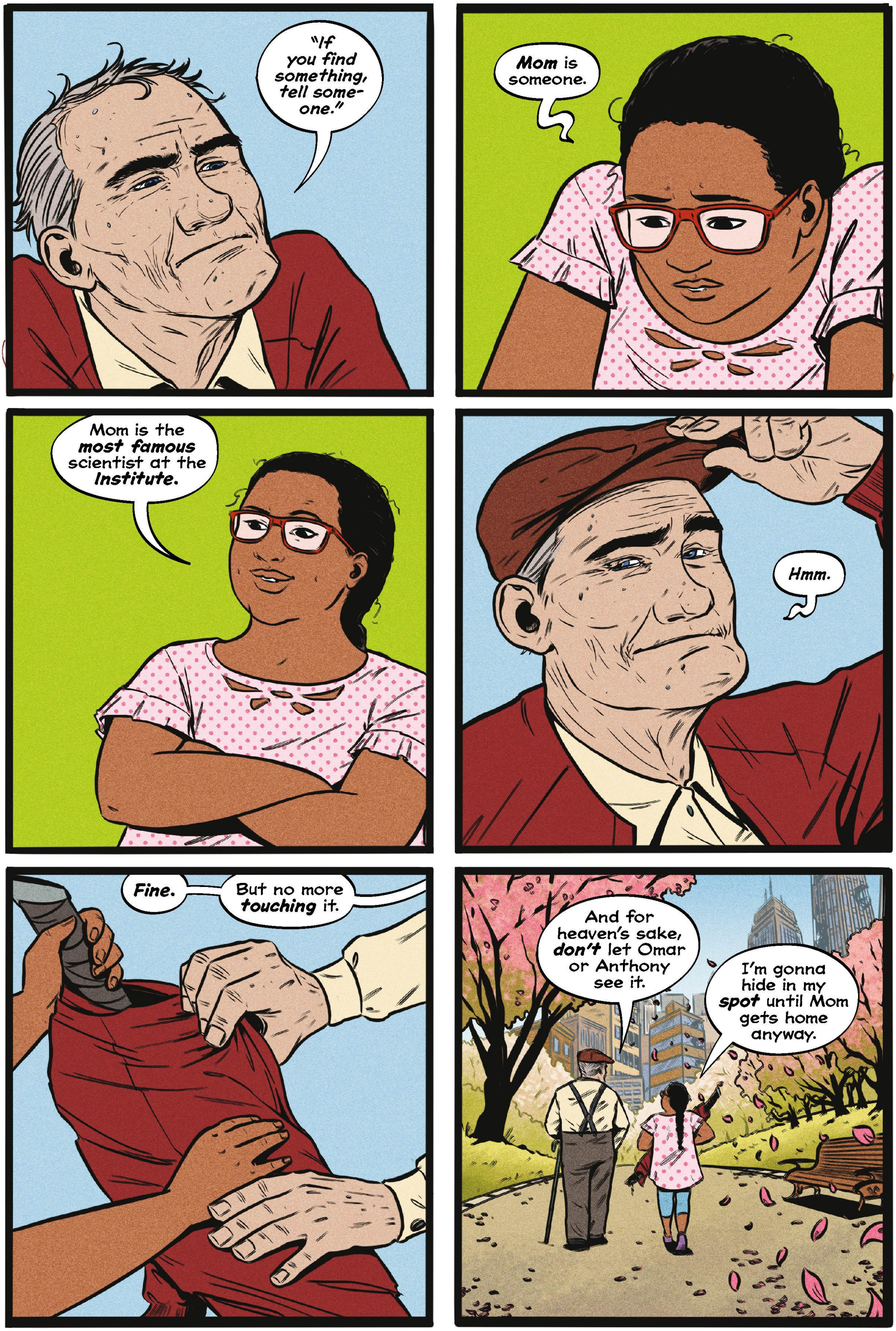
Where are we going to *sleep* tonight?
Ma'am, if you just *wait here,* someone from *Resettlement* will--
We have a *baby.* We can't wait--
DO NOT CROSS CAUTION DO NOT CROSS CAUTION DO NO
This dust could *permanently* harm her lungs--
Shhh...
She's finally asleep--
Hey, Jessica, you okay?
What *is* it?
I dunno...
Our building got *leveled* in the attack. *Everything's* gone.
You're welcome to stay with *us* for a couple days.
We couldn't impose--
It's *no trouble,* really.
Wait, WHAT?!

Later...
It'll be a **tight squeeze**, but we'll manage.
It's only for **tonight**. We're heading to the coast tomorrow.
Mom has **lost** her darn **mind**.
Oh, she lost **that** the day she agreed to **marry** my son. But we're all **glad** she did.
Hmph!
You'll be in the--
--boys' room.
Sigh
SHOVE
Don't worry, I made them **clean** it.
Bathroom's on the left. Don't flush while the **shower's** on, you'll regret it.
Sorry this is so **rushed**, I have to leave for work--
You got a **walk** in you?
Um, I found **this** under the bed?
ANTHONY!
Sorry, Mom.
Reverse race you to the park?
Slowest wins?

How's the hip?
Meh.
How's the spoons?
Meh.


Oof!
Ugh!
So much for the *view* from our favorite bench.
Screw you, monsters.
Language, Tré.
Dear monsters, may your next *procreational* activity cause you *immense* pain. Signed, Tracy Grant.
P.S.: Leave the roses *alone.*
Heh.
Better.
Sigh
Mmhmm.
ZZZ
?
That's not...
AUTION DO NOT ENTER
CAUTION DO NOT ENTER

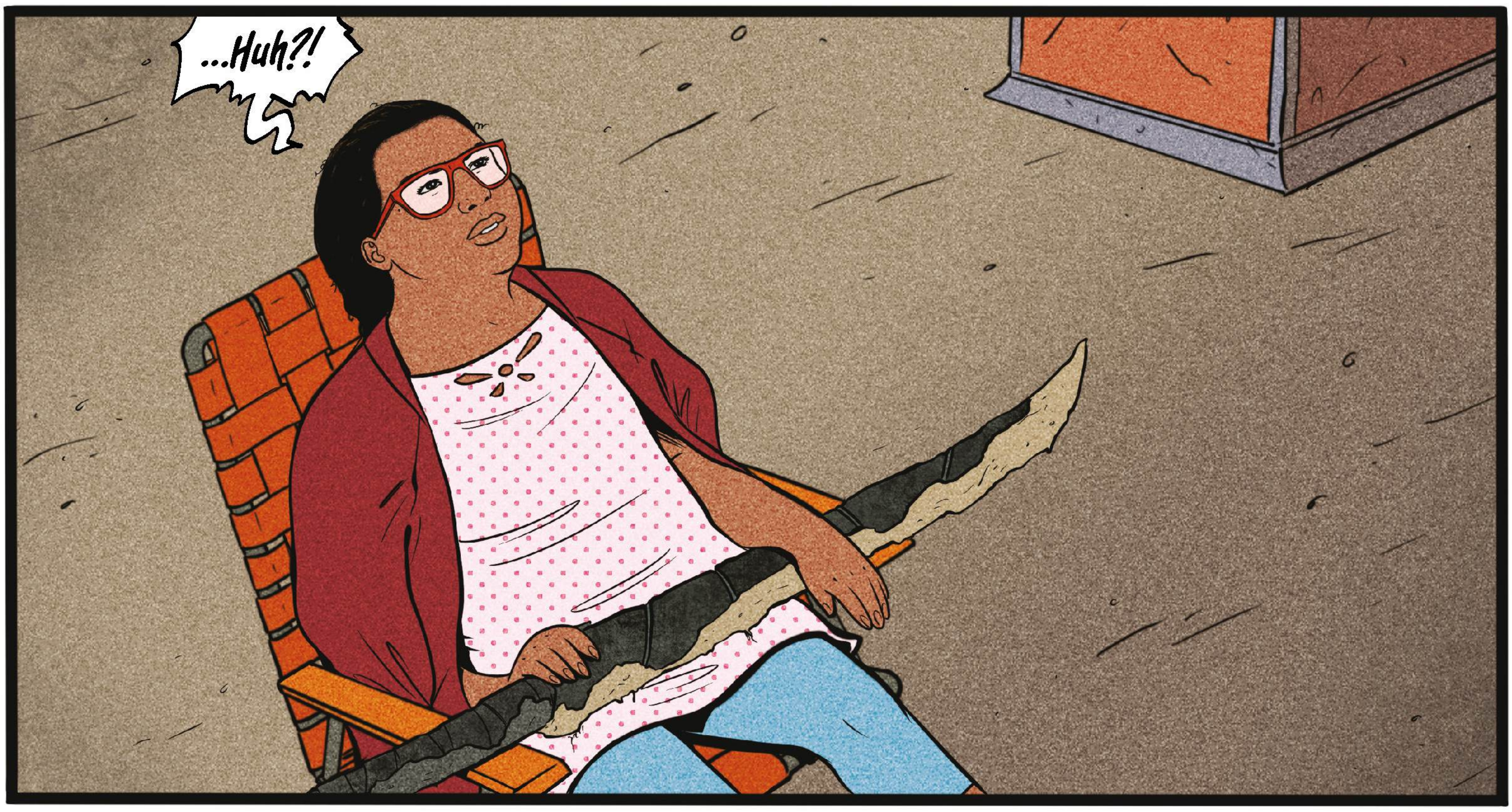

ZZZZ
ZZZ
Hmm...
NNF!
?
TUG
Yesss!
Whatcha find?
KRNNK
Whoops!
AAAGH!
Uh.
Well now...

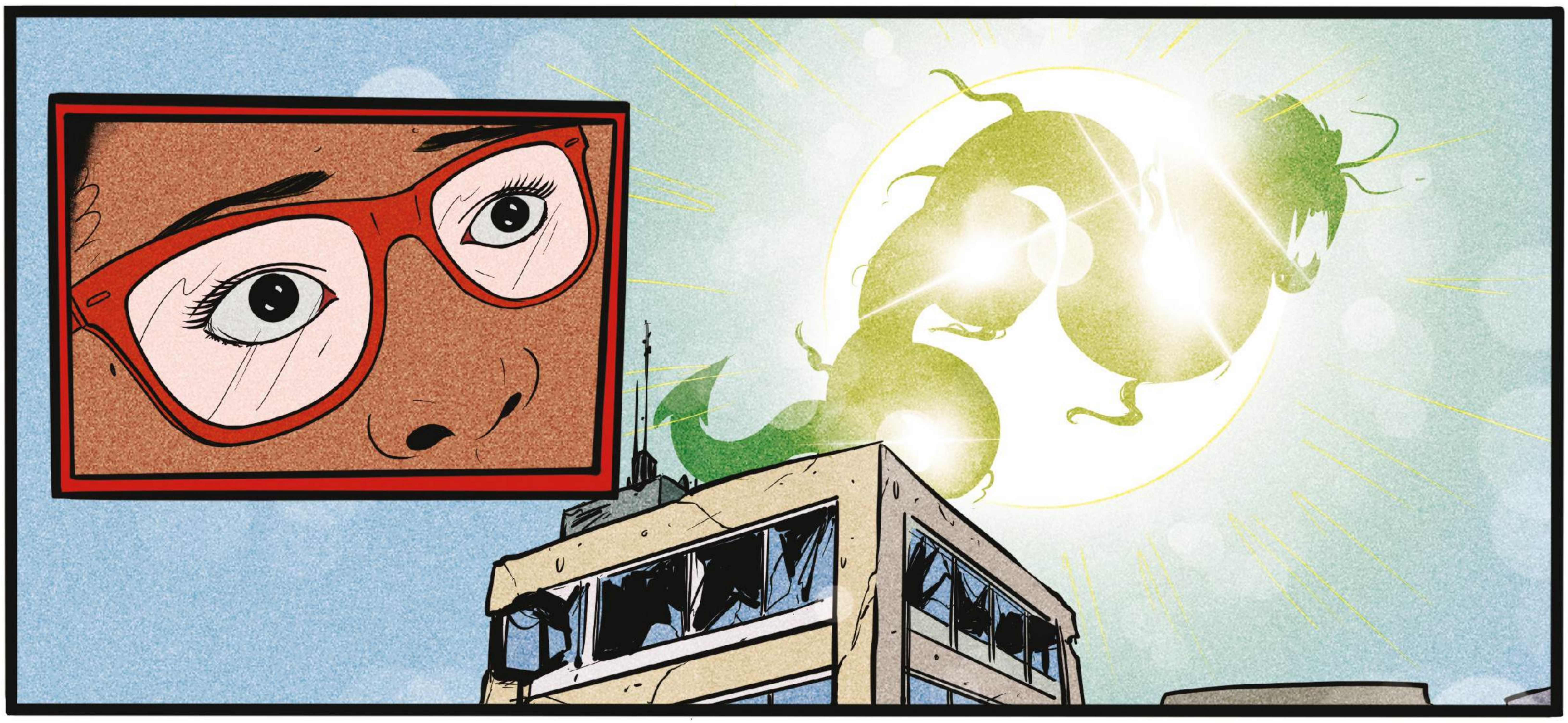

"If you find something, tell someone."
Mom is someone.
Mom is the most famous scientist at the Institute.
Hmm.
Fine.
But no more touching it.
And for heaven's sake, don't let Omar or Anthony see it.
I'm gonna hide in my spot until Mom gets home anyway.

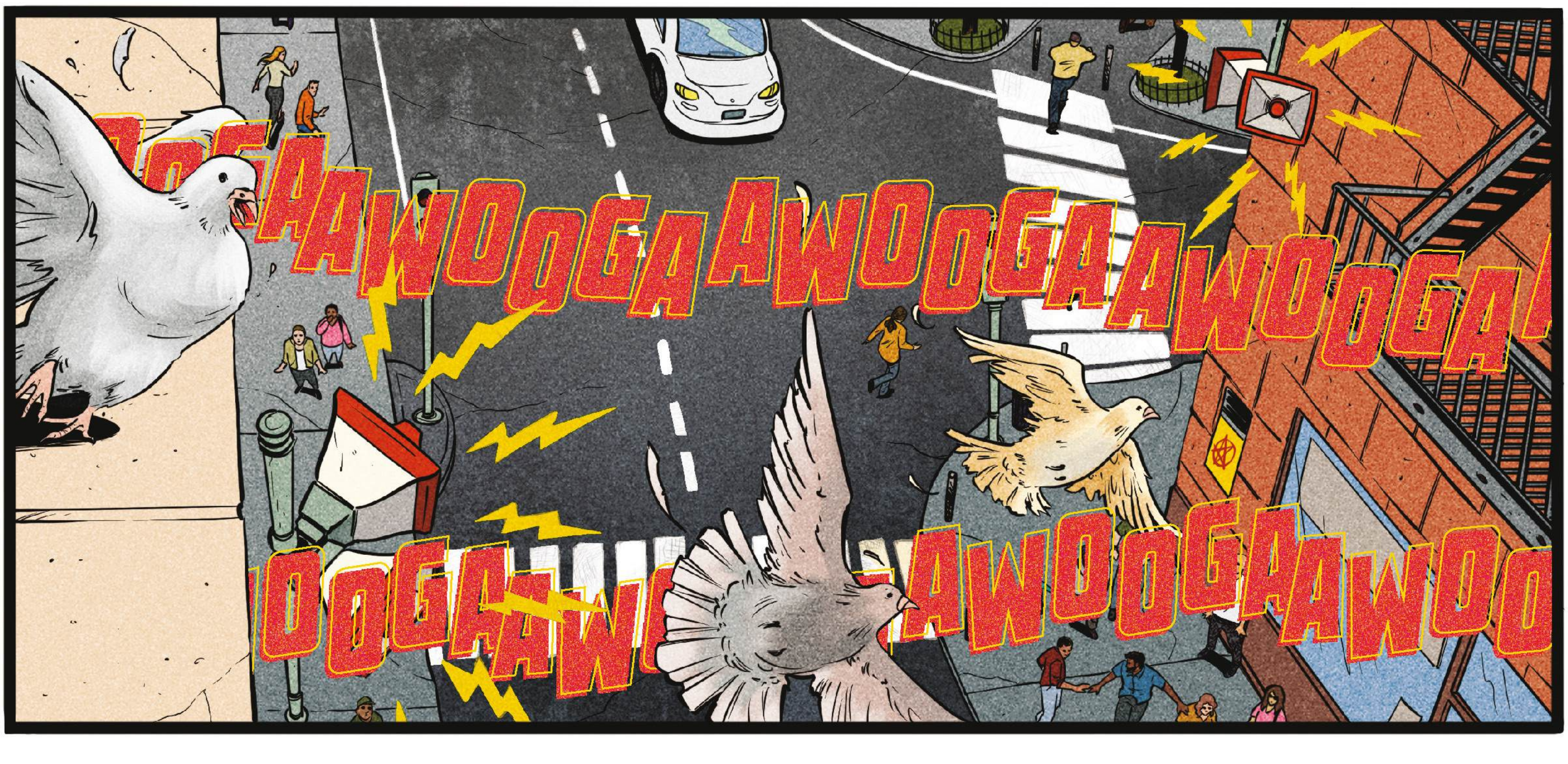
A short walk later...
BRT
Huff
WHAM
Huff
Huff
KLIK

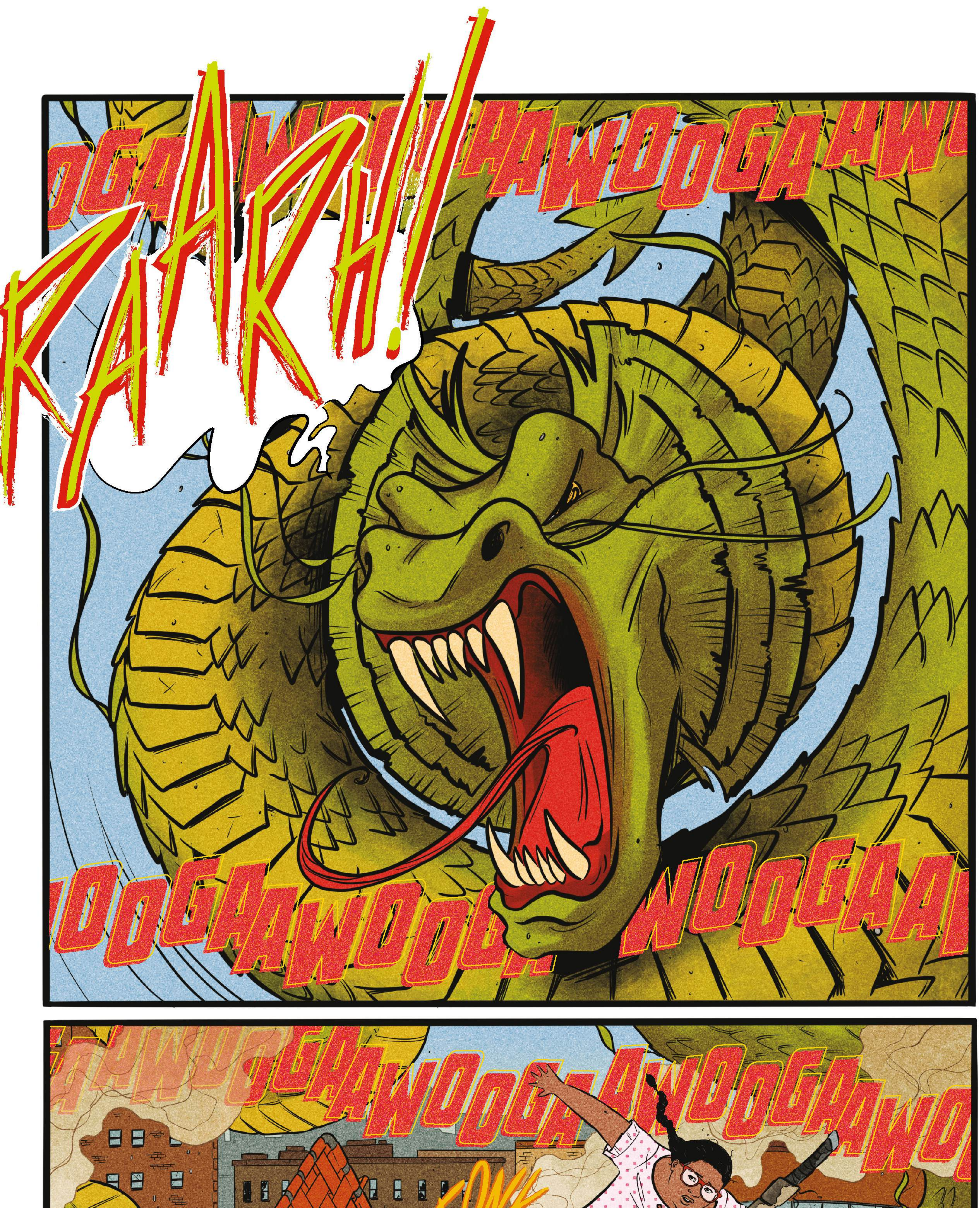
Brrrr

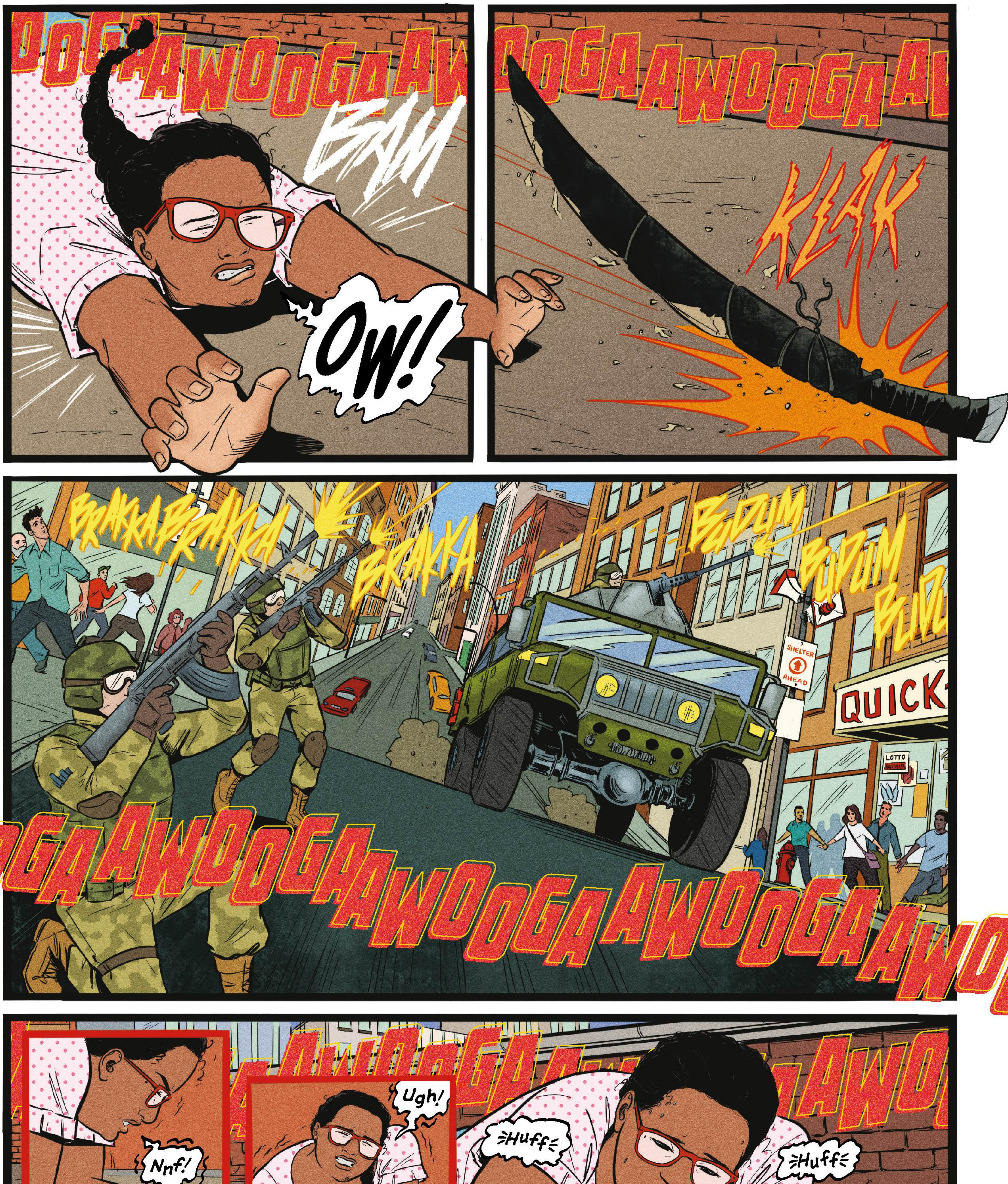
...So, where did you come from, then?
POKE
Heh.
POKE
POKE
POKE
POKE
Hee...
TOUCH
TOUCH
TOUCH
TOUCH


...Huh?!

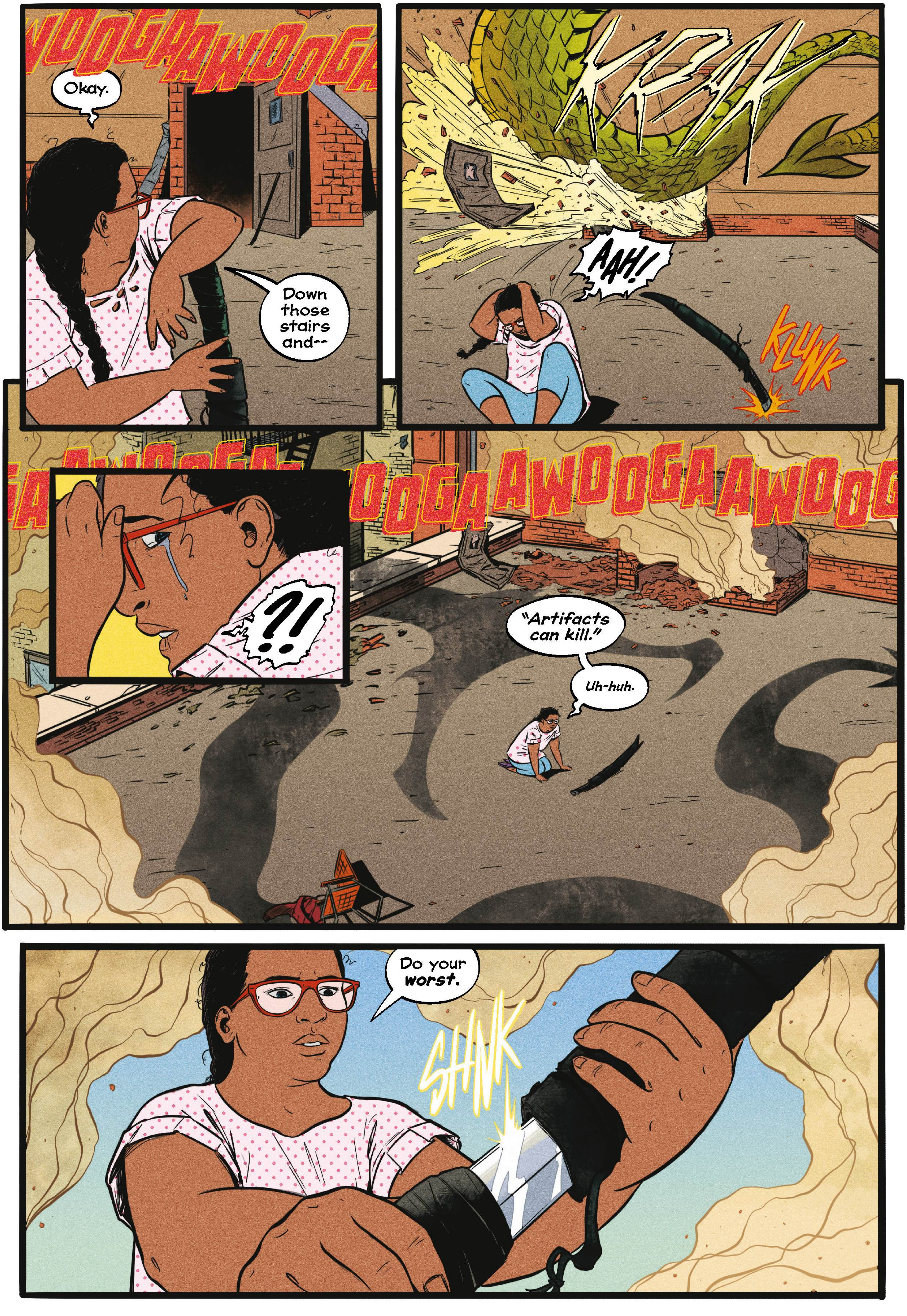



OOGA AWOOGA AWOOGA AWOOGA
OOGA AW AWOOGA AWOO


RAARH!!
AWOOGA AWOOGA
AWOOGA AWOOGA
AWOOGA AWOOGA
TONK
AH!


OOGAAWOOGAAW
BAM
OW!
OOGAAWOOGAAW
KRAK
BRAKKABRAKKA
BRAKKA
BUDUM
BUDUM
BUDU
SHELTER AHEAD
QUICK-
LOTTO
OOGAAWOOGAAWOOGAAWOOGAAWO
AWOOGAAWOOGAAWO
Nnf!
Ugh!
Huff
Huff
Huuu--

RAAARGH!!
AWOOGA AWO
SKRASH
BRAKKA BRAKKA
BRAKKA BRAKKA
BRAKKA BRAKKA
WOOGA AWOOGA AWOOGA A
No giving up...
You can give up tomorrow...
...but... *huff*
...not **today.**

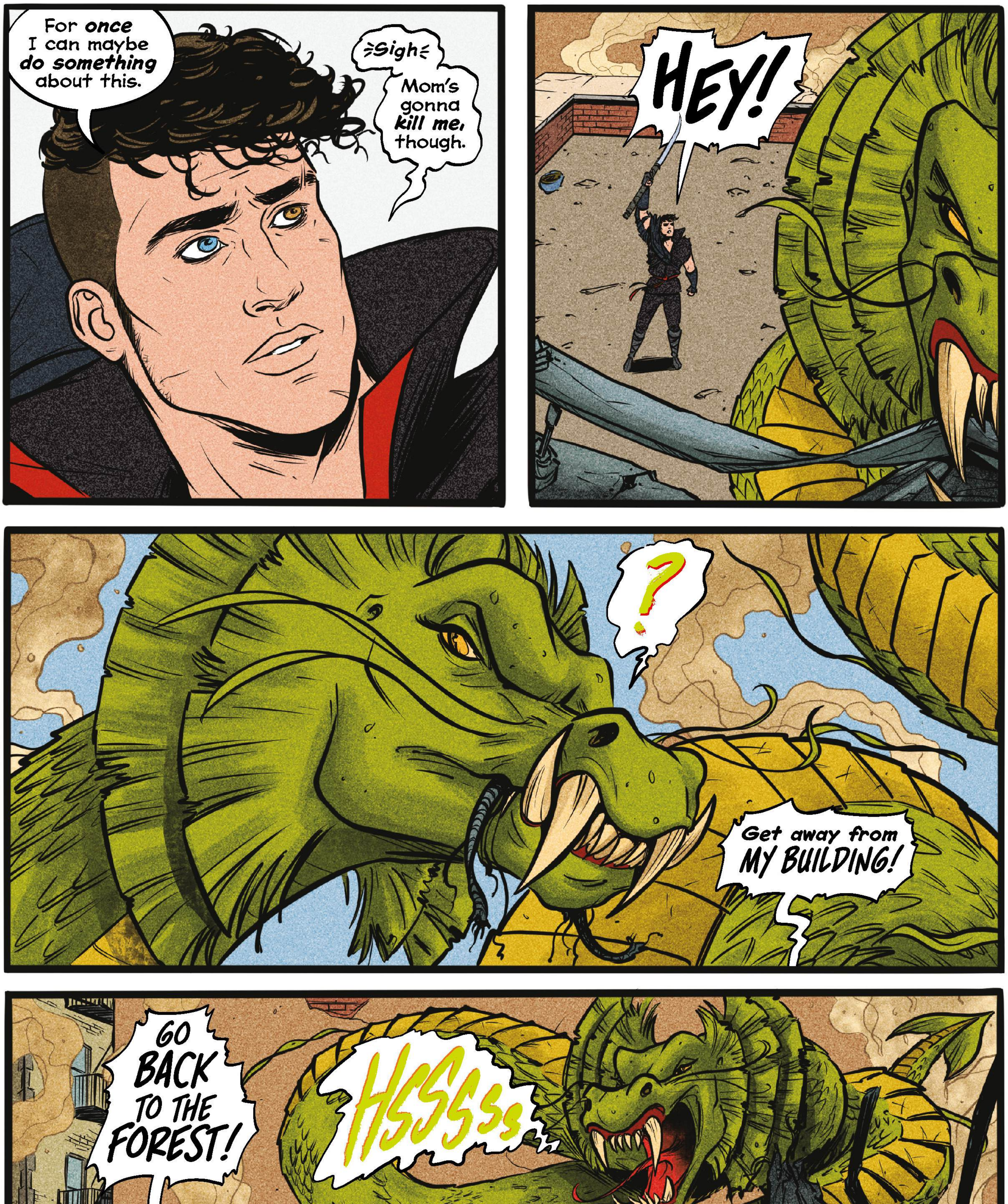

AWOOGAAWOOGA
Okay.
Down those stairs and--
KRRAK
AAH!
KLUNK
AWOOGAAWOOGAAWOOG
?!
"Artifacts can kill."
Uh-huh.
Do your **worst.**
SHNK

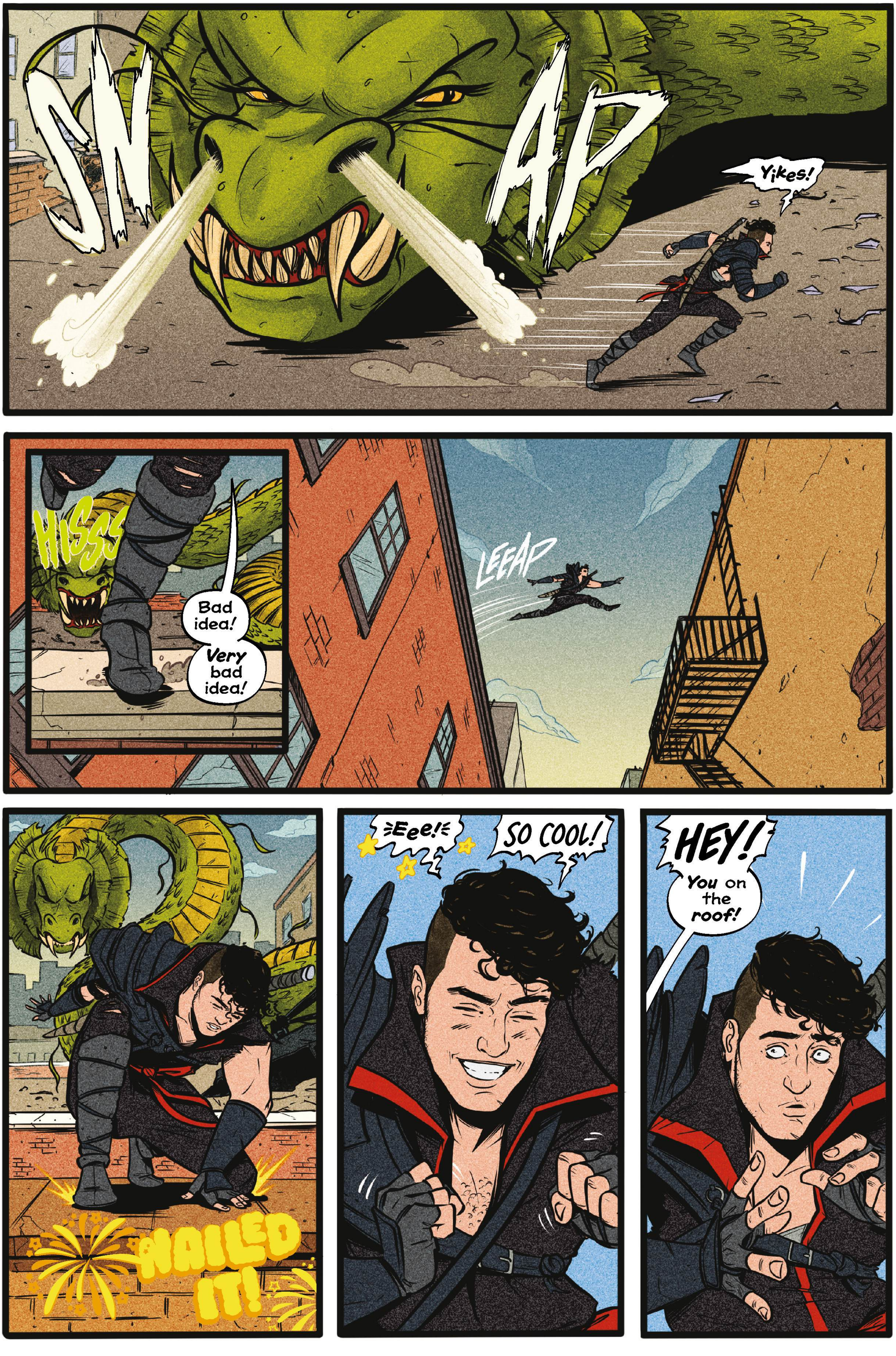
Um.
Ohhhkay.

Seriously...
...
What the **heck?**
!!!
SWOLE
And, *uh,* there's ***that.***
So ***white guy*** was the only option?
Figures.
ROOOAAR!
Is that a ***solidarity*** roar, or--
OOGA AWOOGA AWOO AWOOGA AWOOG

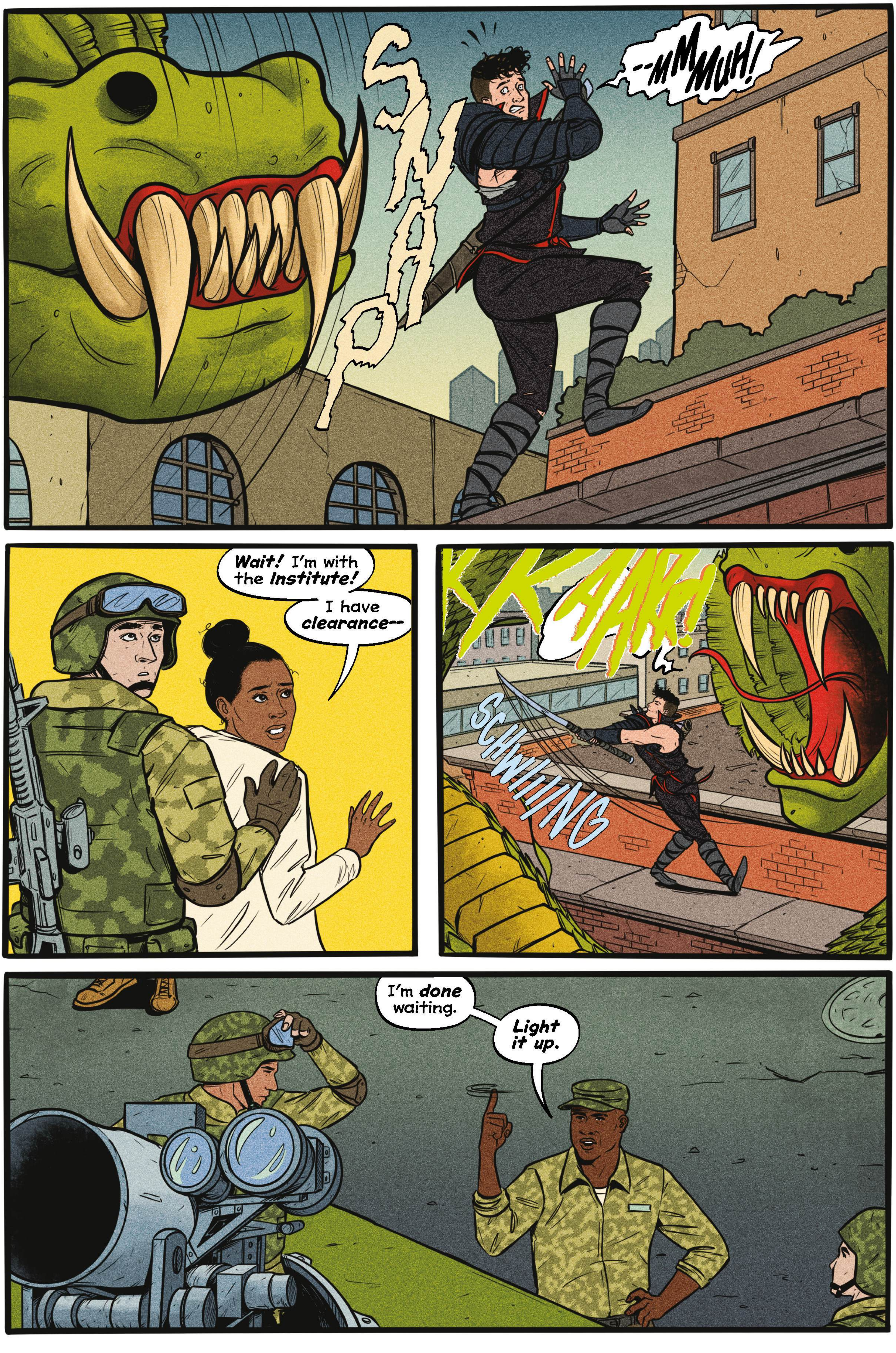
AWOOGA AWOOGA AWOOGA AWOOGA AWOOGA
BRAKKA BRAKKA BRAKKA
AAH!
THNK
THUK
ROAAAAR
THNK
HISSSS
BRAKKABRAKKABRAKKA
HNNH!
KRNNCH
AWOOGA AWOOGA AWOOGA

WOW.
Every-thing **works,** and nothing ***hurts.***
KRAK
HELP!
KRONCH
WHOA!
THHUUD

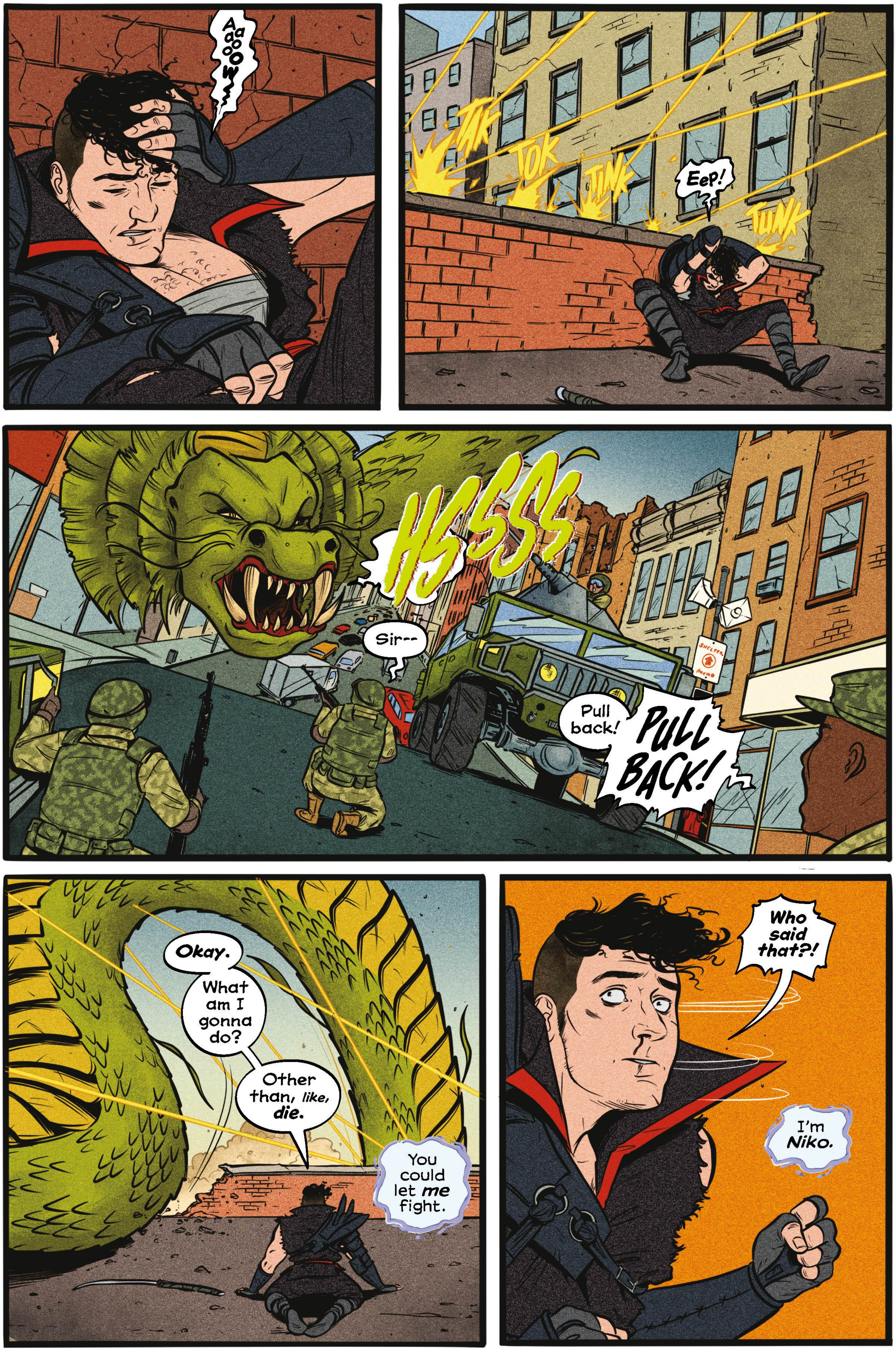

For once I can maybe do something about this.
Sigh
Mom's gonna kill me, though.
HEY!
?
Get away from MY BUILDING!
GO BACK TO THE FOREST!
HSSSss
KRASH

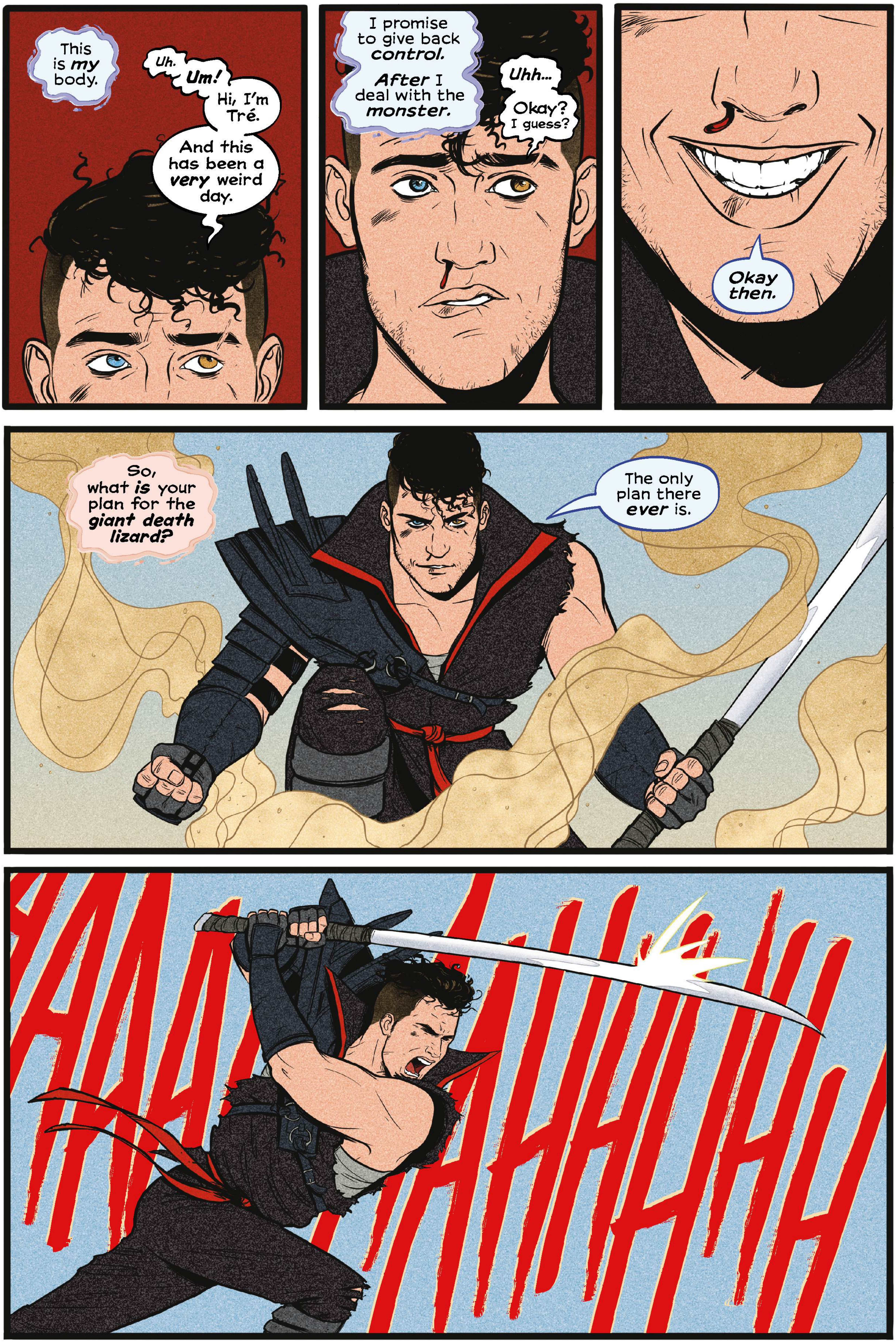

SNAP
Yikes!
HISSS
Bad idea!
Very bad idea!
LEEAP
NAILED IT!
Eee!
SO COOL!
HEY!
You on the roof!

Get *out* of there!
We're gonna *blast* this monster out of the air!
This is *my building.*
Excuse me!
I can't find my *daughter.*
It's *fully evacuated.* Now clear out of our *way.*
I think she might still be *inside.*
She *hides* up near the roof.
...Mom!
Ma'am, you *need* to get to the shelter *now.*
Tré's *safe,* trust m--
Then where is--
I'm--
--*uh,* I mean--
--*she's* okay!

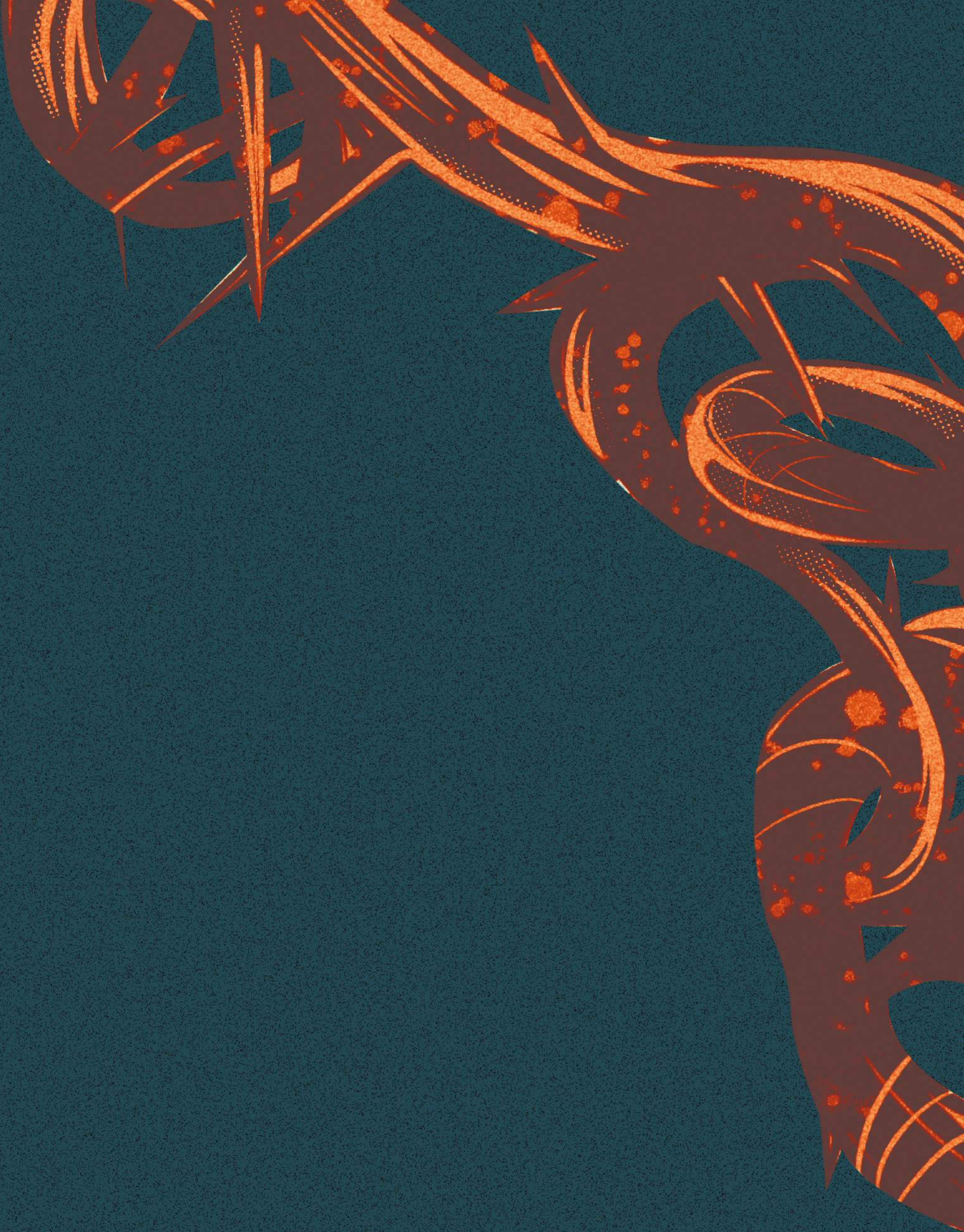

SNAP
--MMMUH!
Wait! I'm with the Institute!
I have clearance--
KAAR!
SCHWIIIING
I'm done waiting.
Light it up.

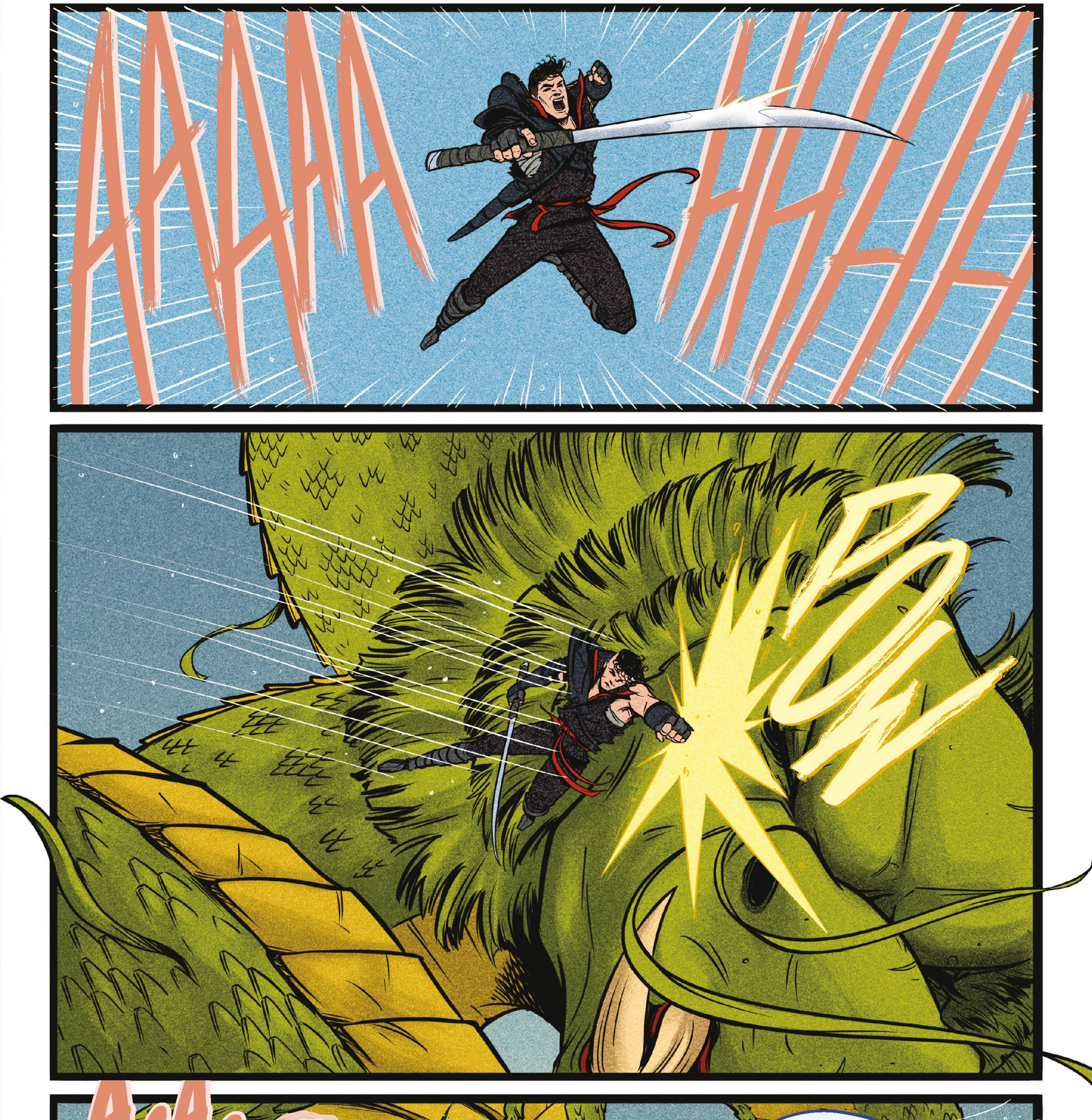
FOOOOM
GRRRR!
PLINK
SPAK
TINK
WHUD
!!!
KRAK


AaooOW~~
TAK
TOK
TINK
Eep!
TUNK
HSSSS
Sir--
Pull back!
PULL BACK!
Okay.
What am I gonna do?
Other than, like, die.
You could let me fight.
Who said that?!
I'm Niko.

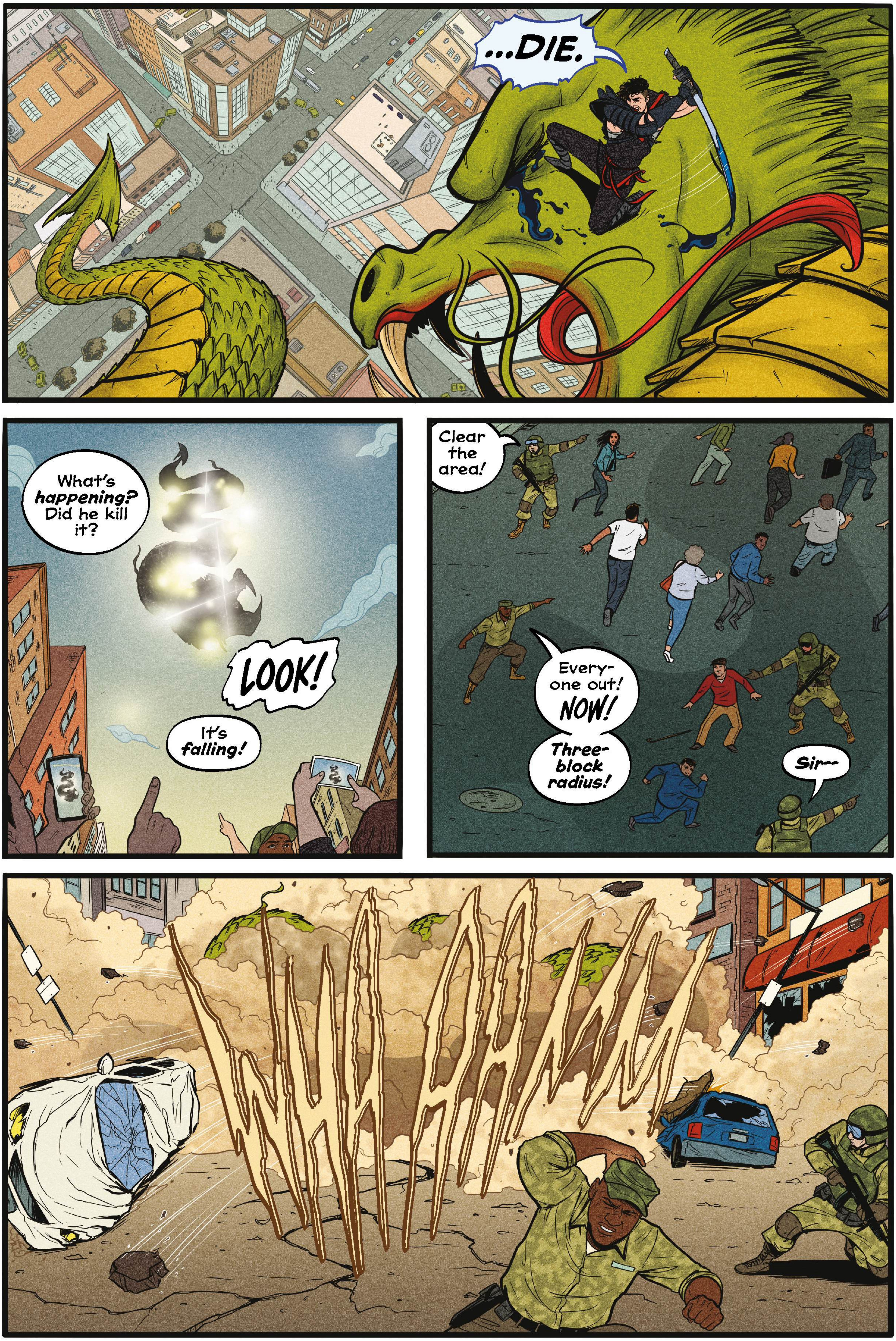

This is *my* body.
Uh.
Um!
Hi, I'm Tré.
And this has been a *very* weird day.
I promise to give back *control.*
After I deal with the *monster.*
Uhh...
Okay? I guess?
Okay then.
So, what *is* your plan for the *giant death lizard?*
The only plan there *ever* is.
AAAAAAHHHHHH

2

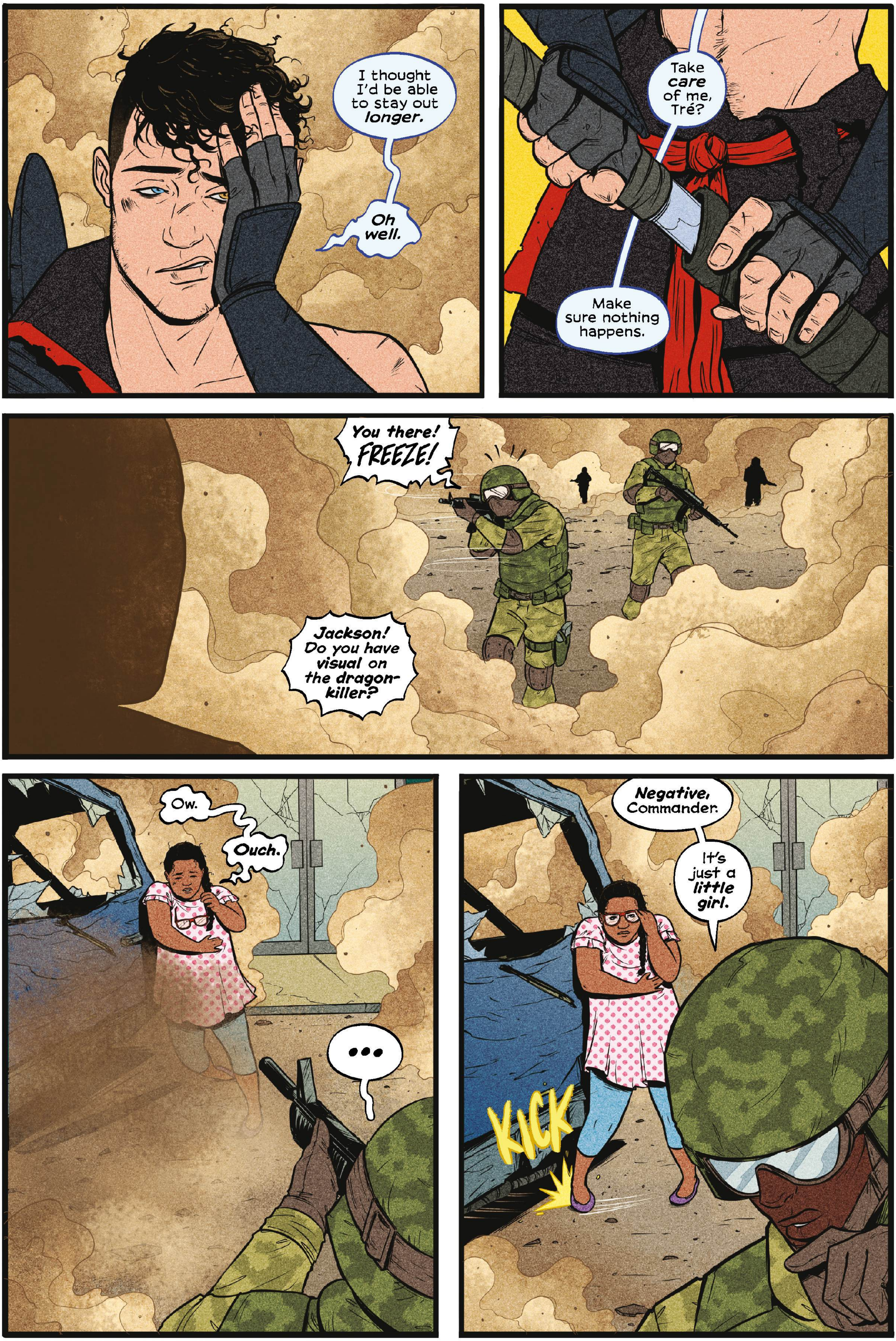


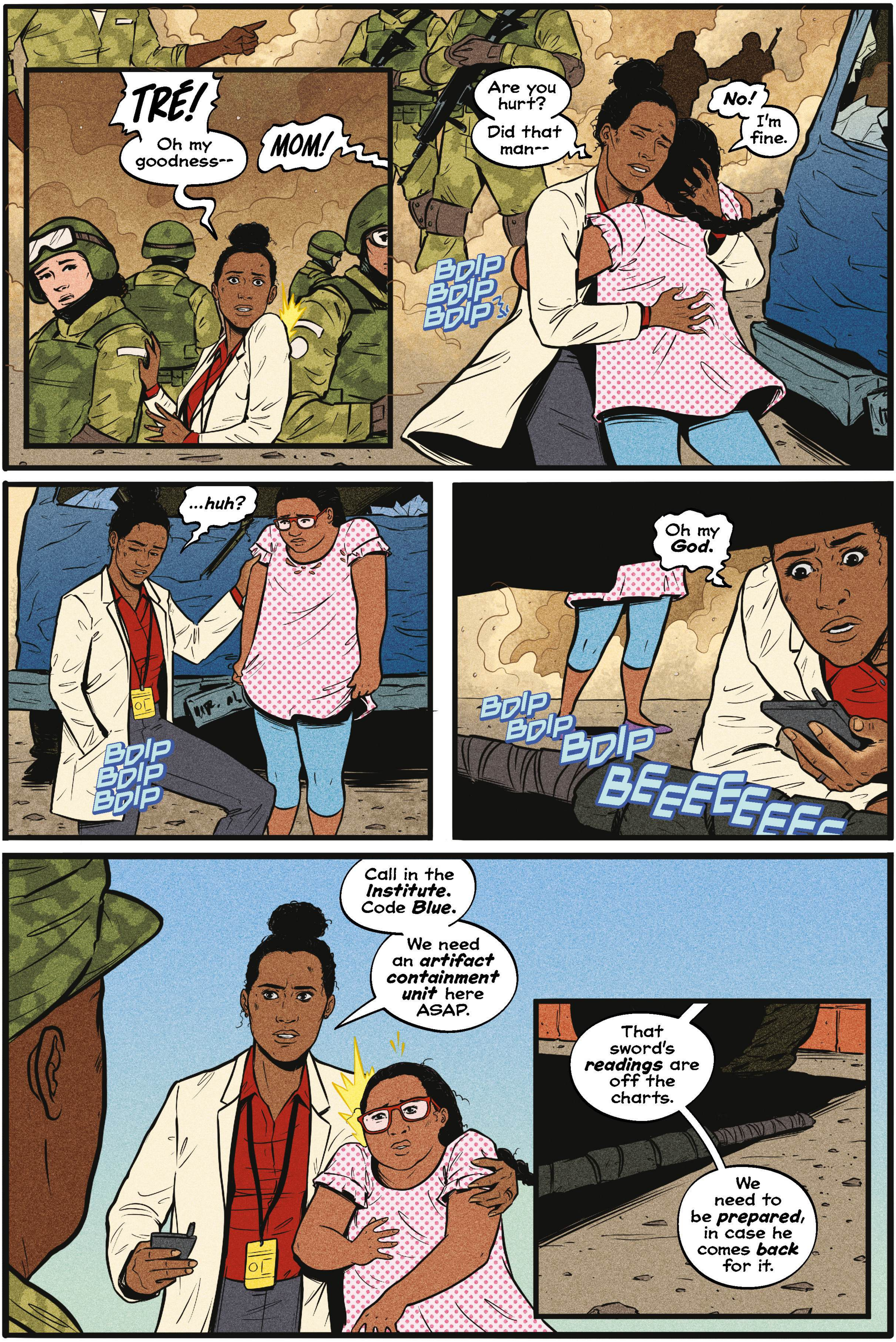

AAAAAHHHHH
POW
AAAAAHH!!
Tré, *please* stop screaming in my head. It's *very* distracting.
Oops!
Sorry!

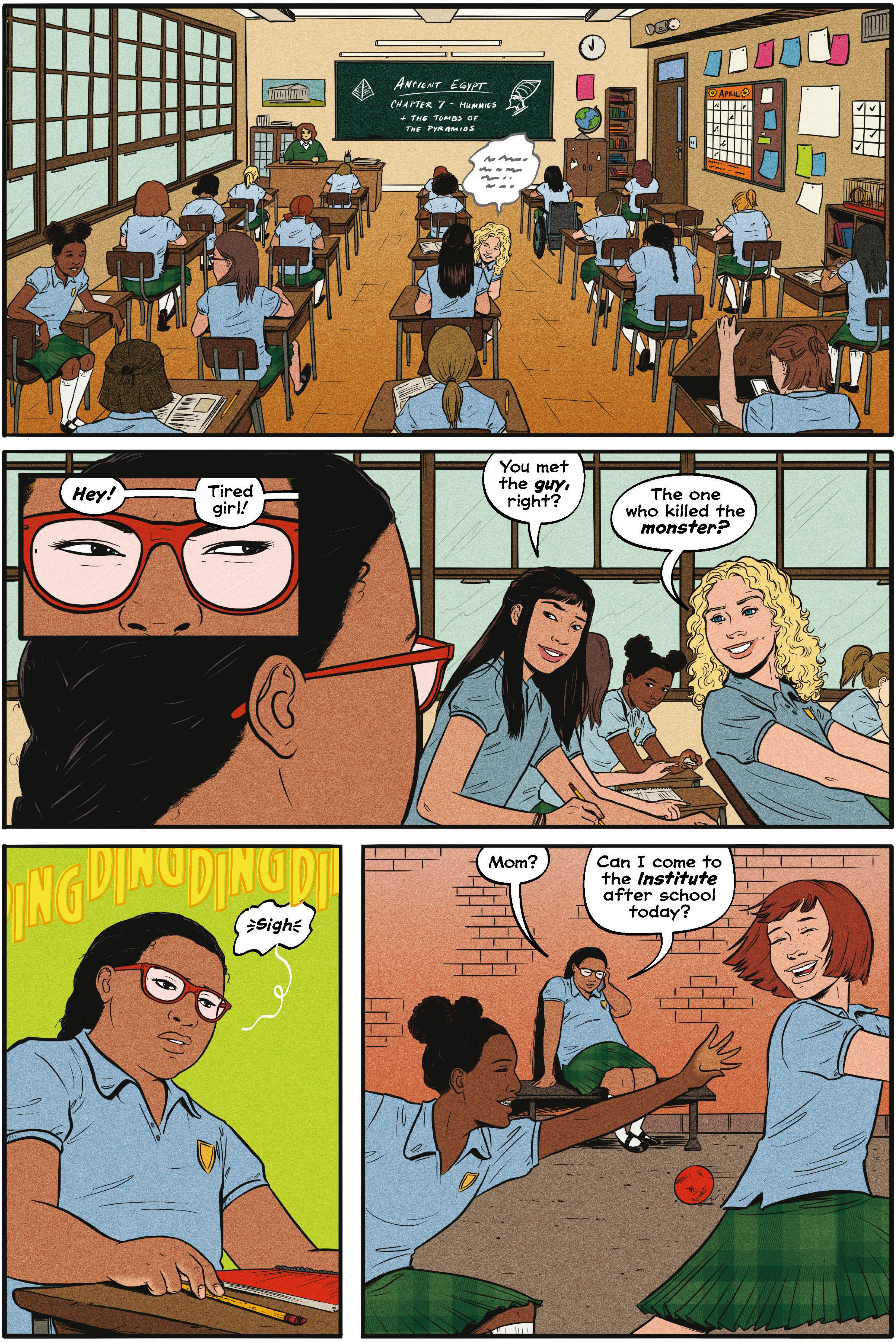
DINK
Uh!
SMAK
--Oof!
GRAB
Hold fire.
RAOA
SHUNK
AIEEE
HNNGH!
Come on...
KRONCH

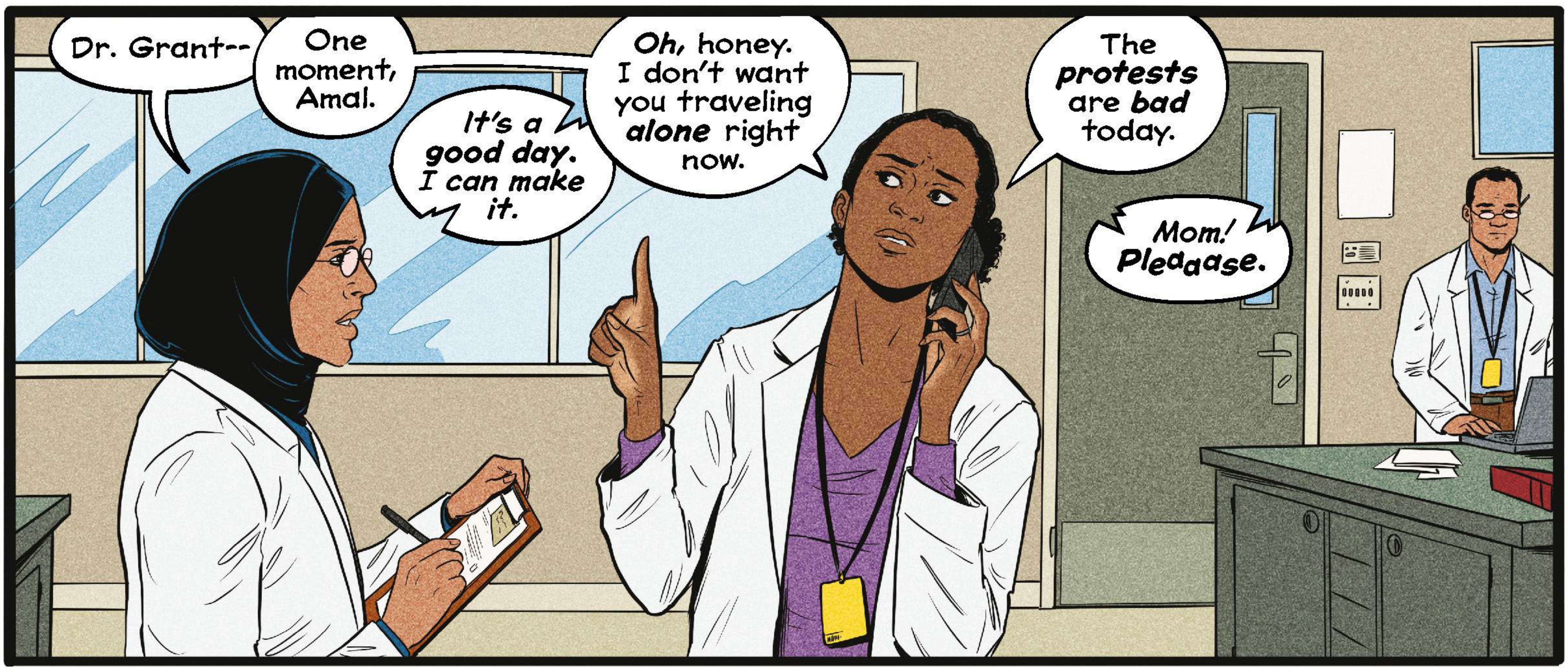

...DIE.
What's happening? Did he kill it?
LOOK!
It's falling!
Clear the area!
Every-one out! NOW!
Three-block radius!
Sir--
WHAAMM

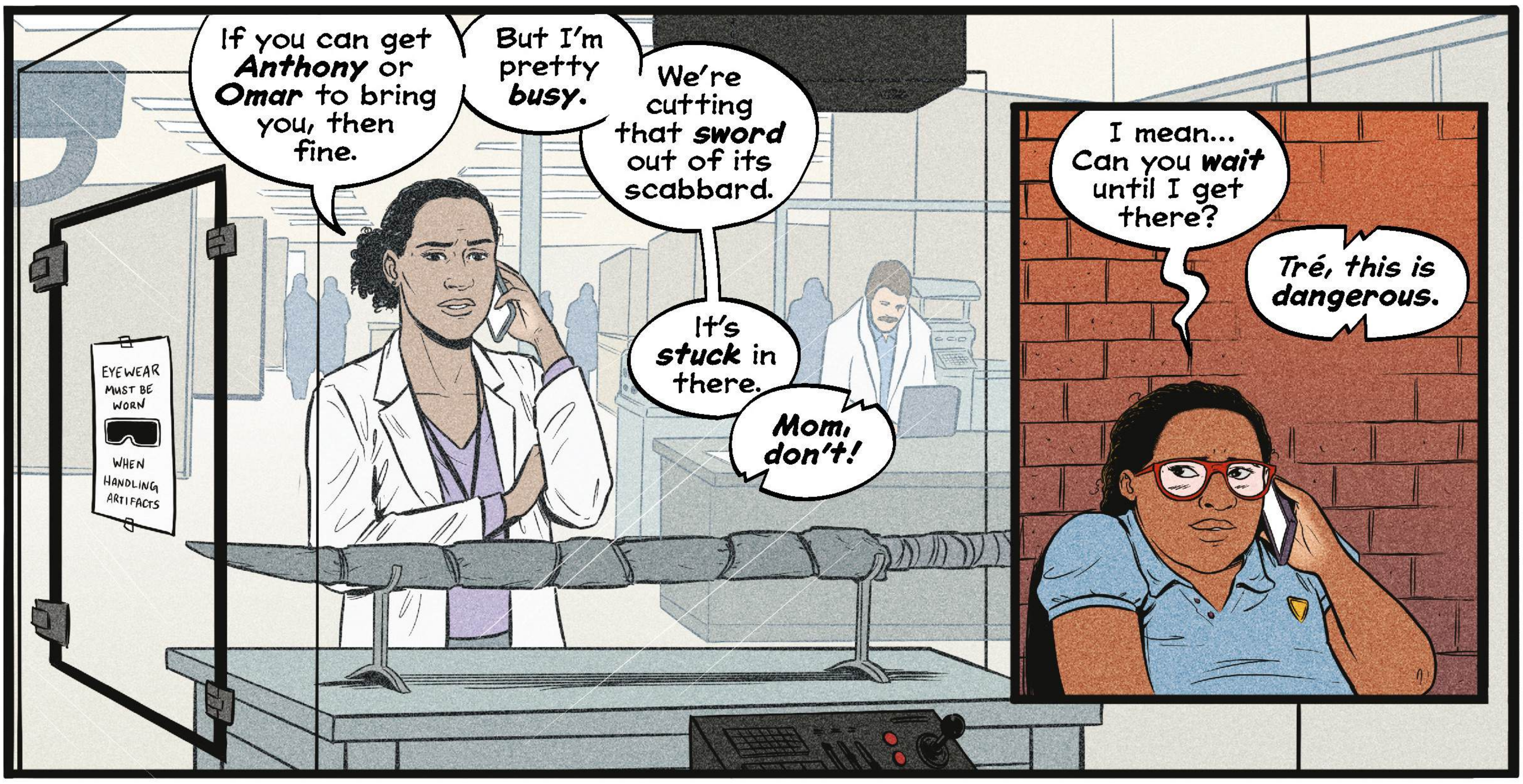
Attention!
This is the Community Protection Service!
Oww.
KLANK
The guy with the sword.
He's magical. We need to take him to the Institute for containment and questioning.
Yes, ma'am.
Lay down your weapon and put your hands up!
Ugh!
Nngh!
Niko! You need to get out of here!
My mom's job... she studies magical things. Locks them up.

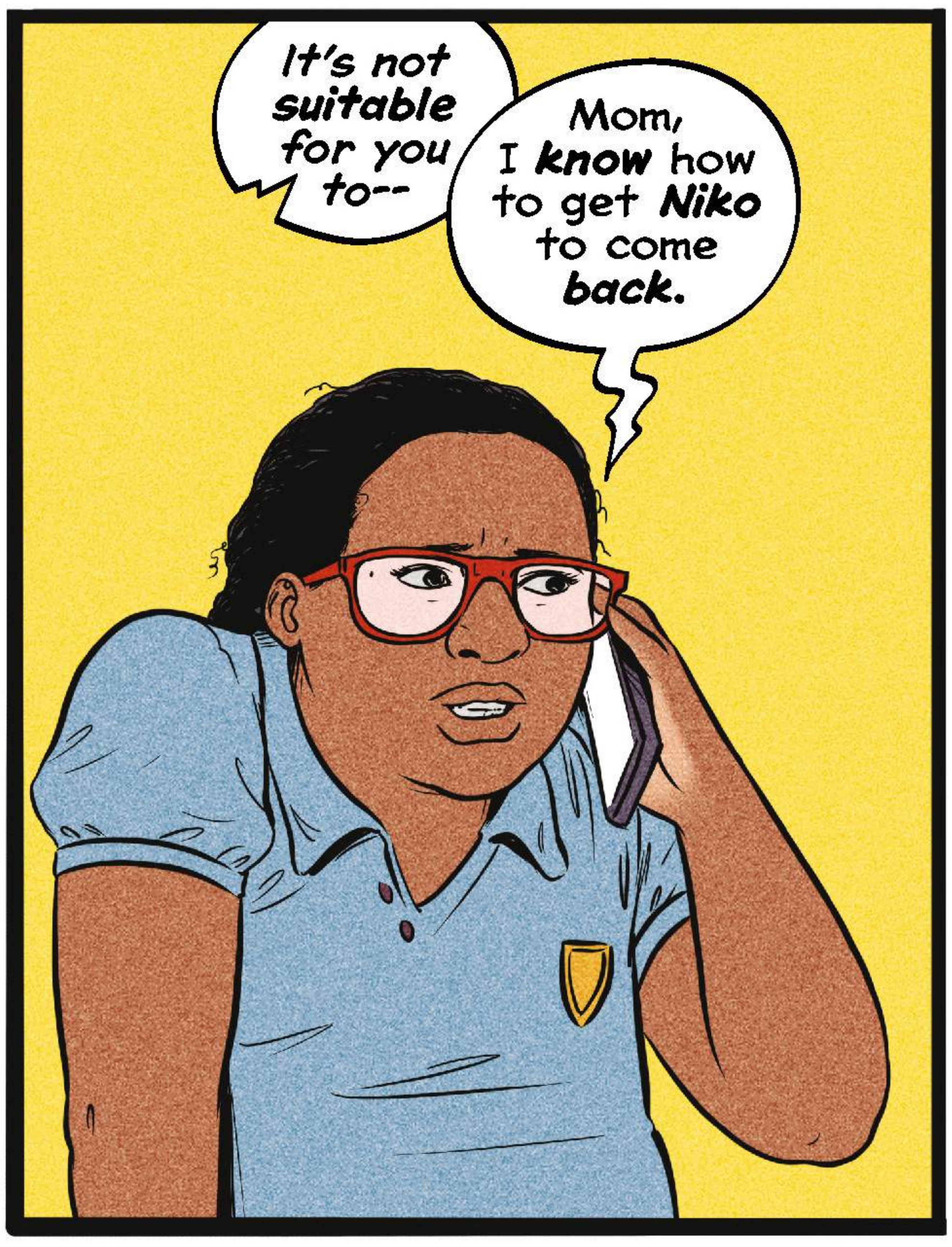

I thought I'd be able to stay out *longer.*
Oh well.
Take *care* of me, Tré?
Make sure nothing happens.
You there! FREEZE!
Jackson! Do you have visual on the dragon-killer?
Ow.
Ouch.
...
Negative, Commander.
It's just a *little girl.*
KICK

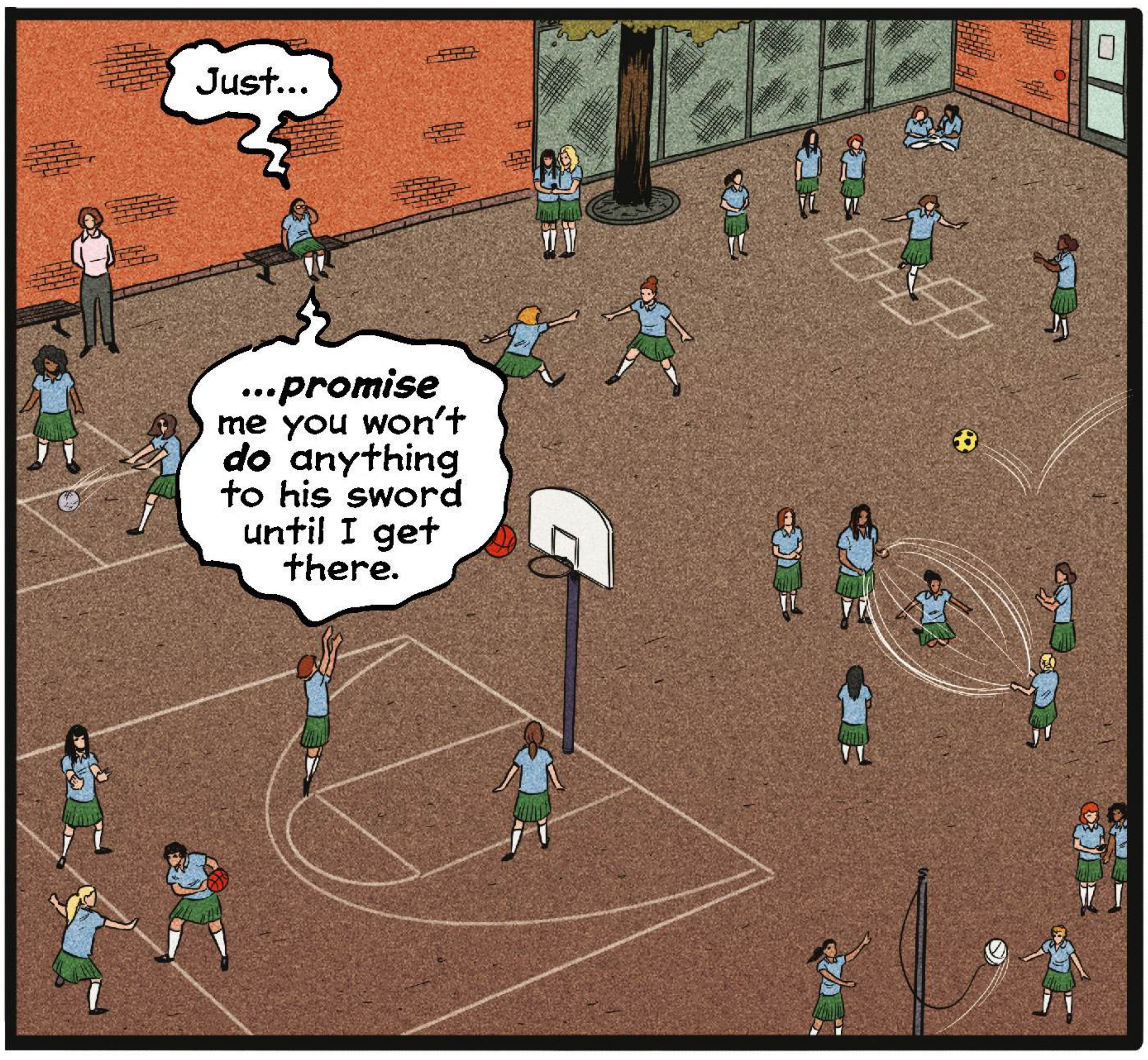

TRÉ!
Oh my goodness--
MOM!
Are you hurt?
Did that man--
No! I'm fine.
BDIP BDIP BDIP
...huh?
BDIP BDIP BDIP
Oh my God.
BDIP BDIP BDIP BEEEEEEEE
Call in the Institute. Code Blue.
We need an artifact containment unit here ASAP.
That sword's readings are off the charts.
We need to be prepared, in case he comes back for it.

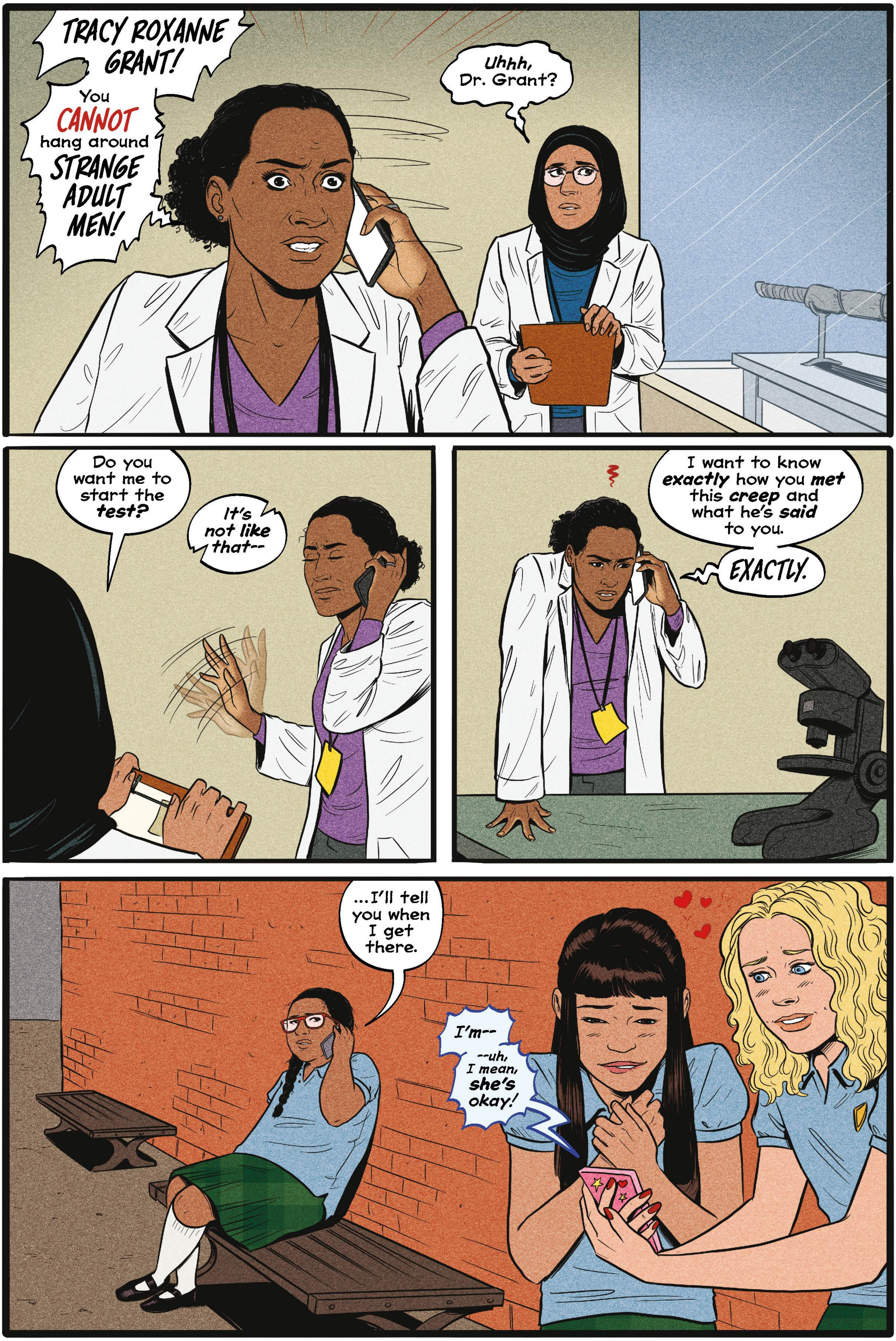

ANCIENT EGYPT
CHAPTER 7 - MUMMIES
+ THE TOMBS OF THE PYRAMIDS
APRIL
Hey!
Tired girl!
You met the *guy,* right?
The one who killed the ***monster?***
DINGDINGDINGDI
Sigh
Mom?
Can I come to the ***Institute*** after school today?

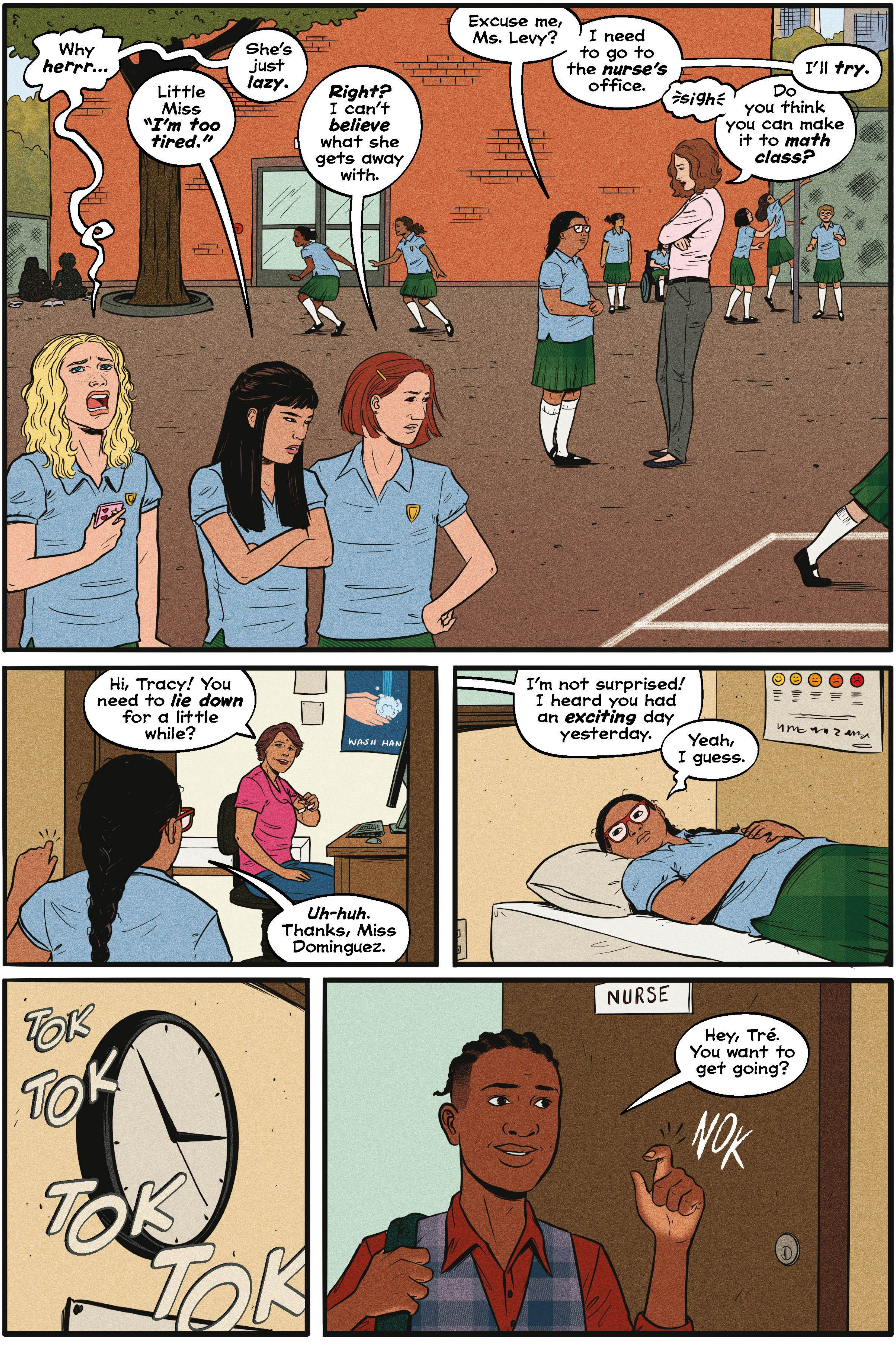

Dr. Grant--
One moment, Amal.
Oh, honey. I don't want you traveling *alone* right now.
It's a *good day.* I can make it.
The *protests* are *bad* today.
Mom! Pleaaase.


If you can get *Anthony* or *Omar* to bring you, then fine.
But I'm pretty *busy.*
We're cutting that *sword* out of its scabbard.
It's *stuck* in there.
Mom, don't!
EYEWEAR MUST BE WORN WHEN HANDLING ARTIFACTS
I mean... Can you *wait* until I get there?
Tré, this is *dangerous.*

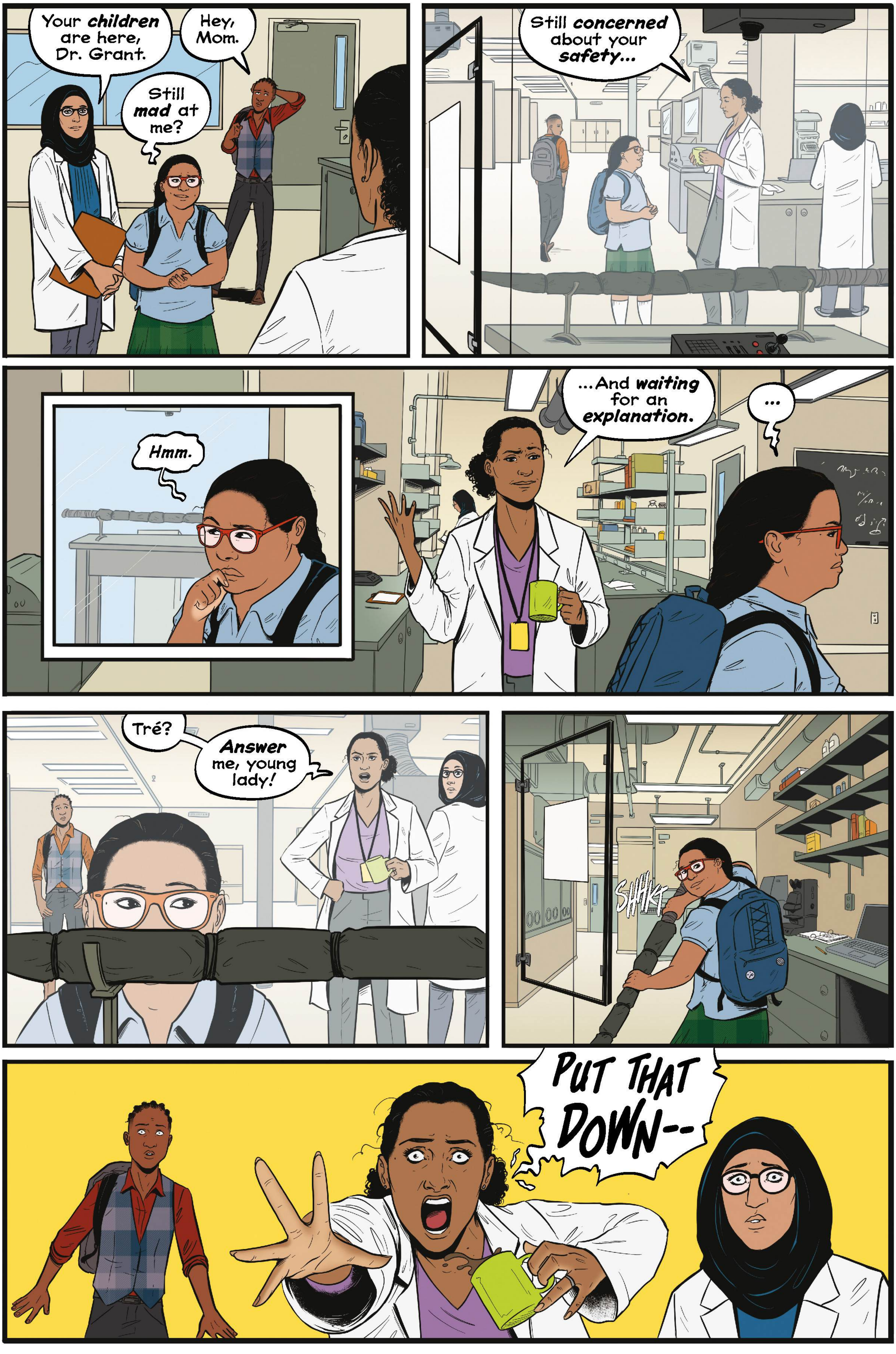

It's not *suitable* for you to--
Mom, I *know* how to get *Niko* to come *back.*

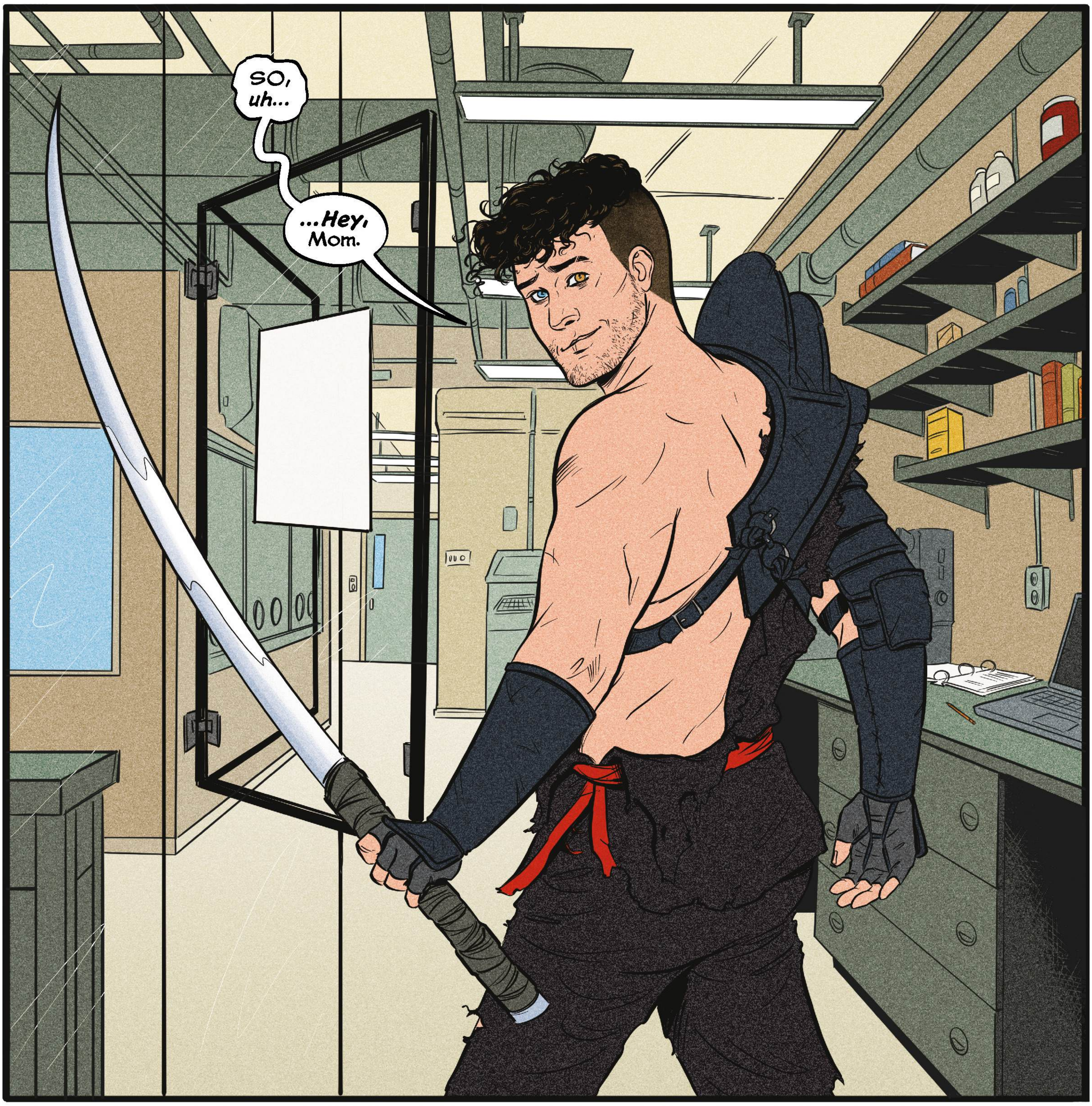

Just...
...*promise* me you won't *do* anything to his sword until I get there.

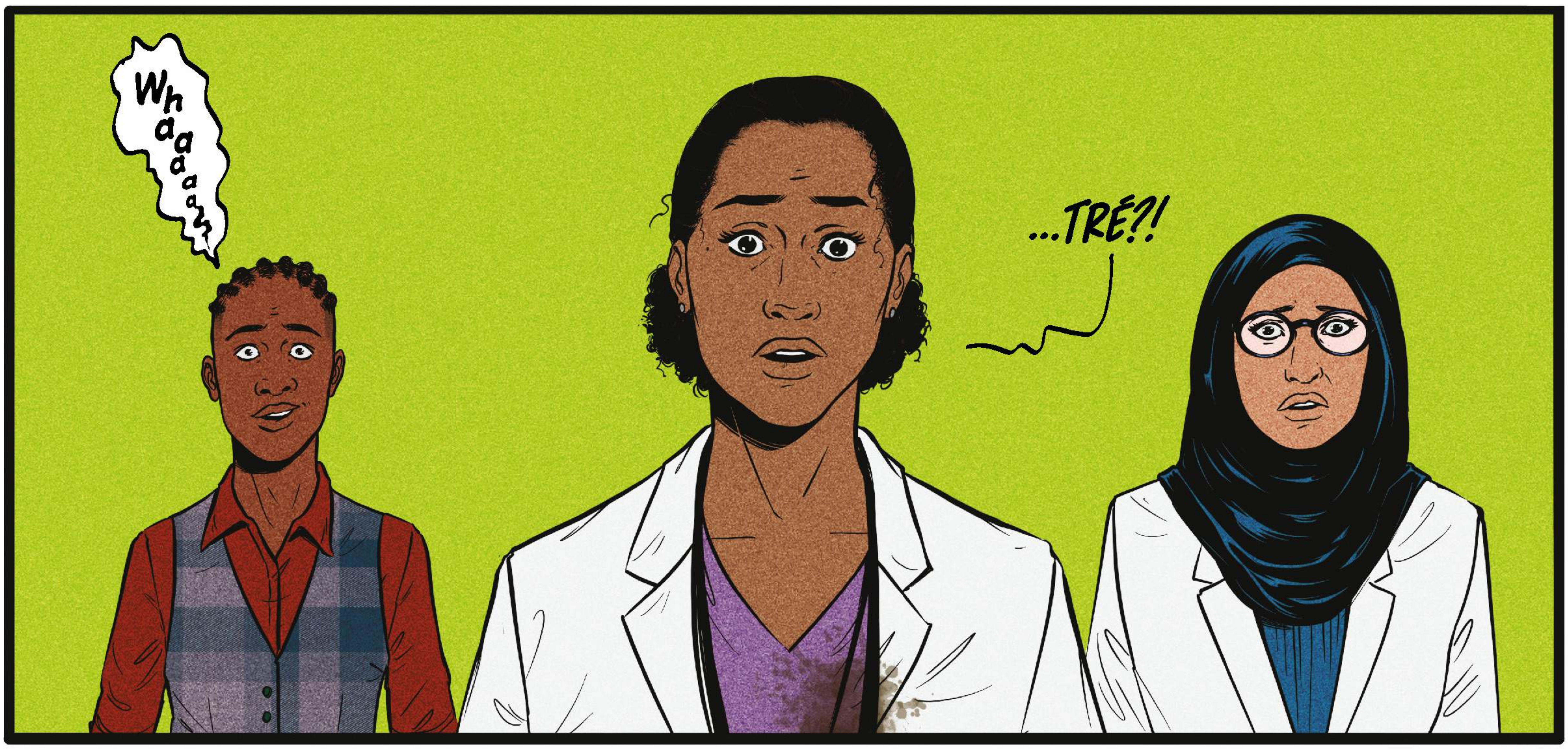

TRACY ROXANNE GRANT!
You CANNOT hang around STRANGE ADULT MEN!
Uhhh, Dr. Grant?
Do you want me to start the **test?**
It's ***not like*** *that--*
I want to know ***exactly*** how you ***met*** this ***creep*** and what he's ***said*** to you.
EXACTLY.
...I'll tell you when I get there.
I'm--
--uh, I mean, ***she's*** *okay!*

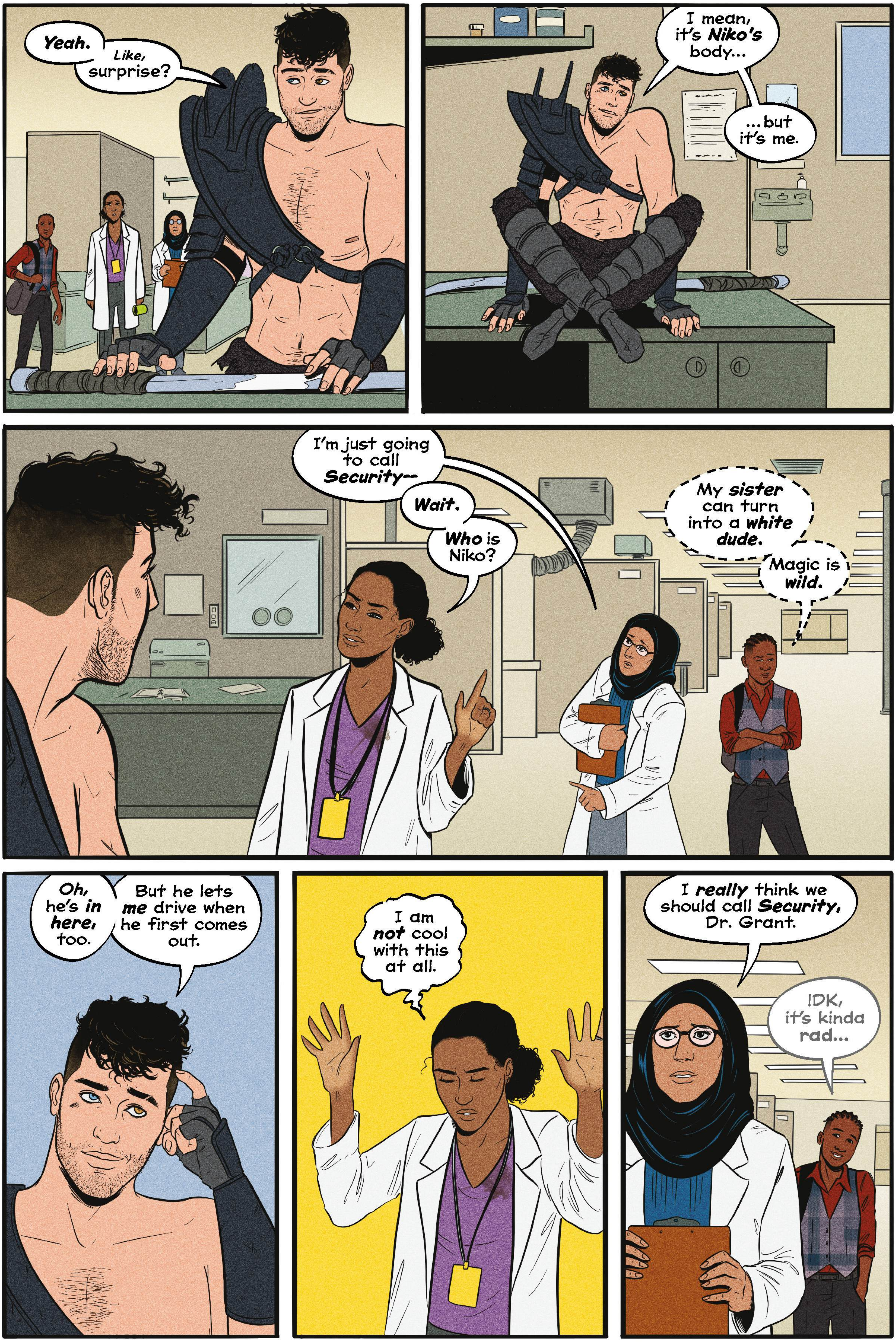

Why *herrr...*
She's just *lazy.*
Little Miss *"I'm too tired."*
Right? I can't *believe* what she gets away with.
Excuse me, Ms. Levy?
I need to go to the *nurse's* office.
sigh
Do you think you can make it to *math class?*
I'll *try.*
Hi, Tracy! You need to *lie down* for a little while?
WASH HAN
Uh-huh. Thanks, Miss Dominguez.
I'm not surprised! I heard you had an *exciting* day yesterday.
Yeah, I guess.
TOK
TOK
TOK
TOK
NURSE
Hey, Tré. You want to get going?
NOK

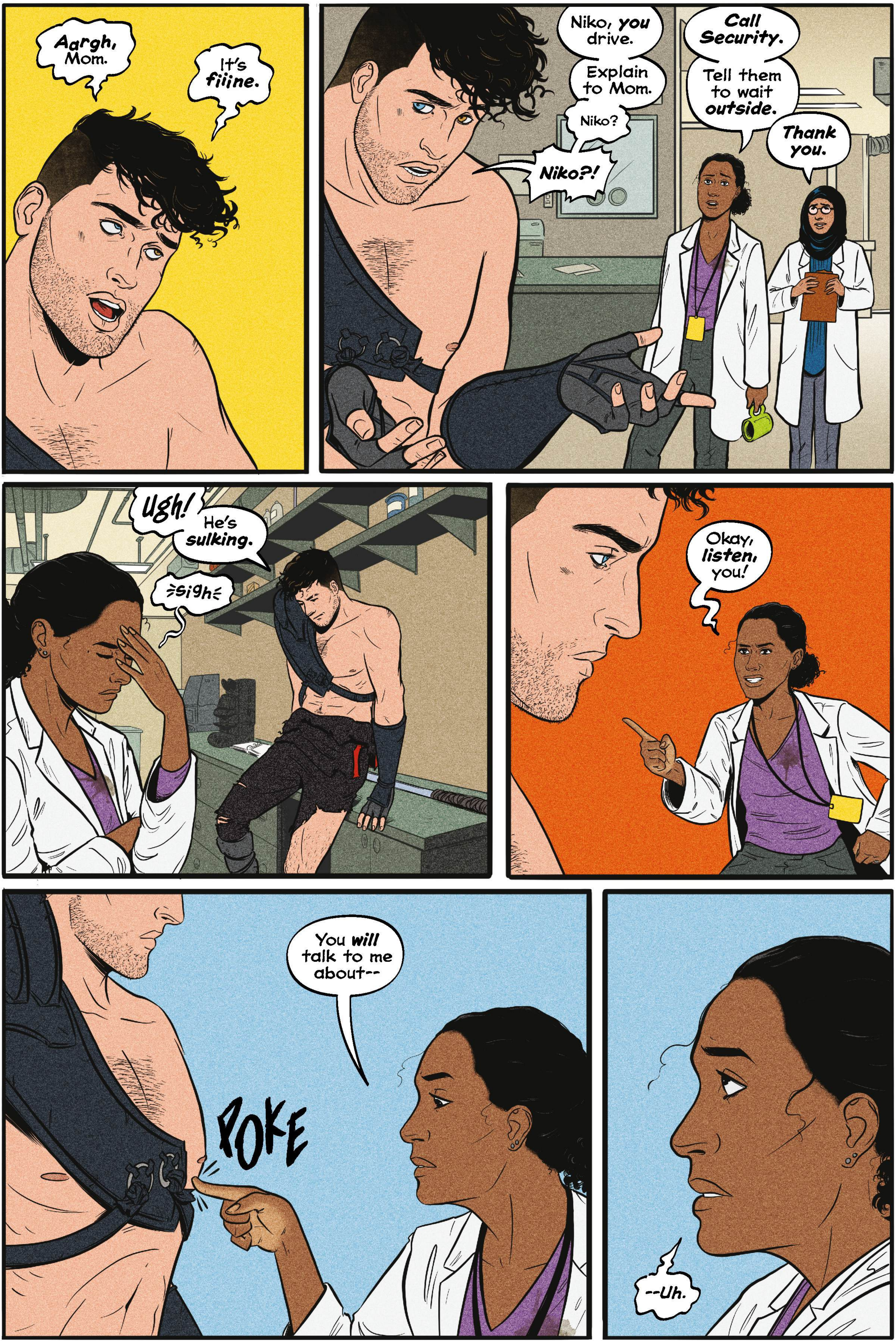
END MAGIC NOW!
BOMB THE FOREST!
END MAGIC NOW!
SHUT THE INSTITUTE!
MAGIC KILLS
ATAN'S RIGHT HAND
BURN
BOMB THE FOREST
SOLUTIONS NOW! STUDIES LATER!
NO MAGIC
KEEP
MAGIC = EVIL
SAVE OUR CITY
ZENS ETY ST!
MAGIC
OMB THE FOREST!
END MAGIC NOW!
BOMB THE FOREST!
END MAGIC NOW!
BOMB THE FO

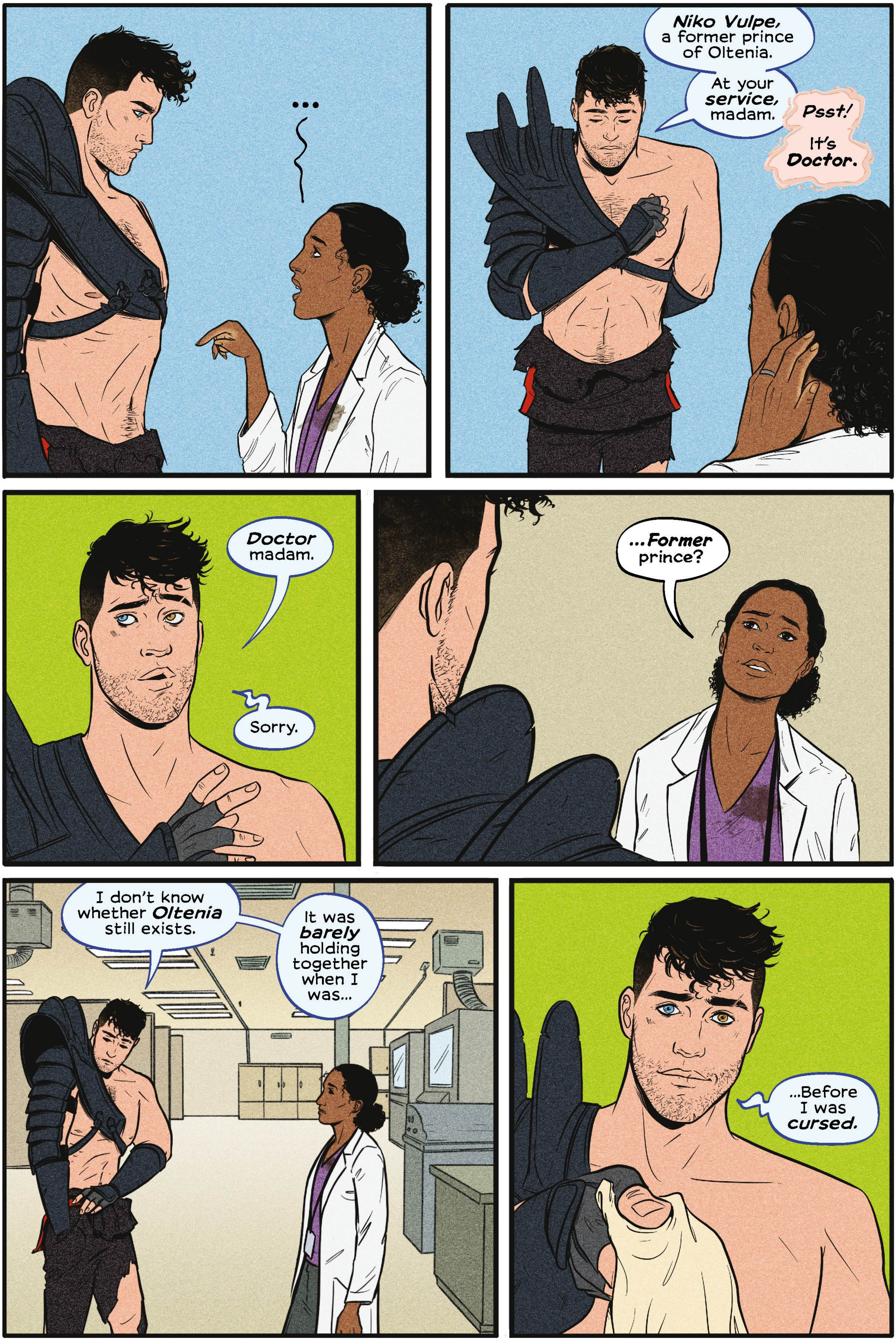

Your children are here, Dr. Grant.
Hey, Mom.
Still mad at me?
Still concerned about your safety...
Hmm.
...And waiting for an explanation.
...
Tré?
Answer me, young lady!
SHHKT
PUT THAT DOWN--

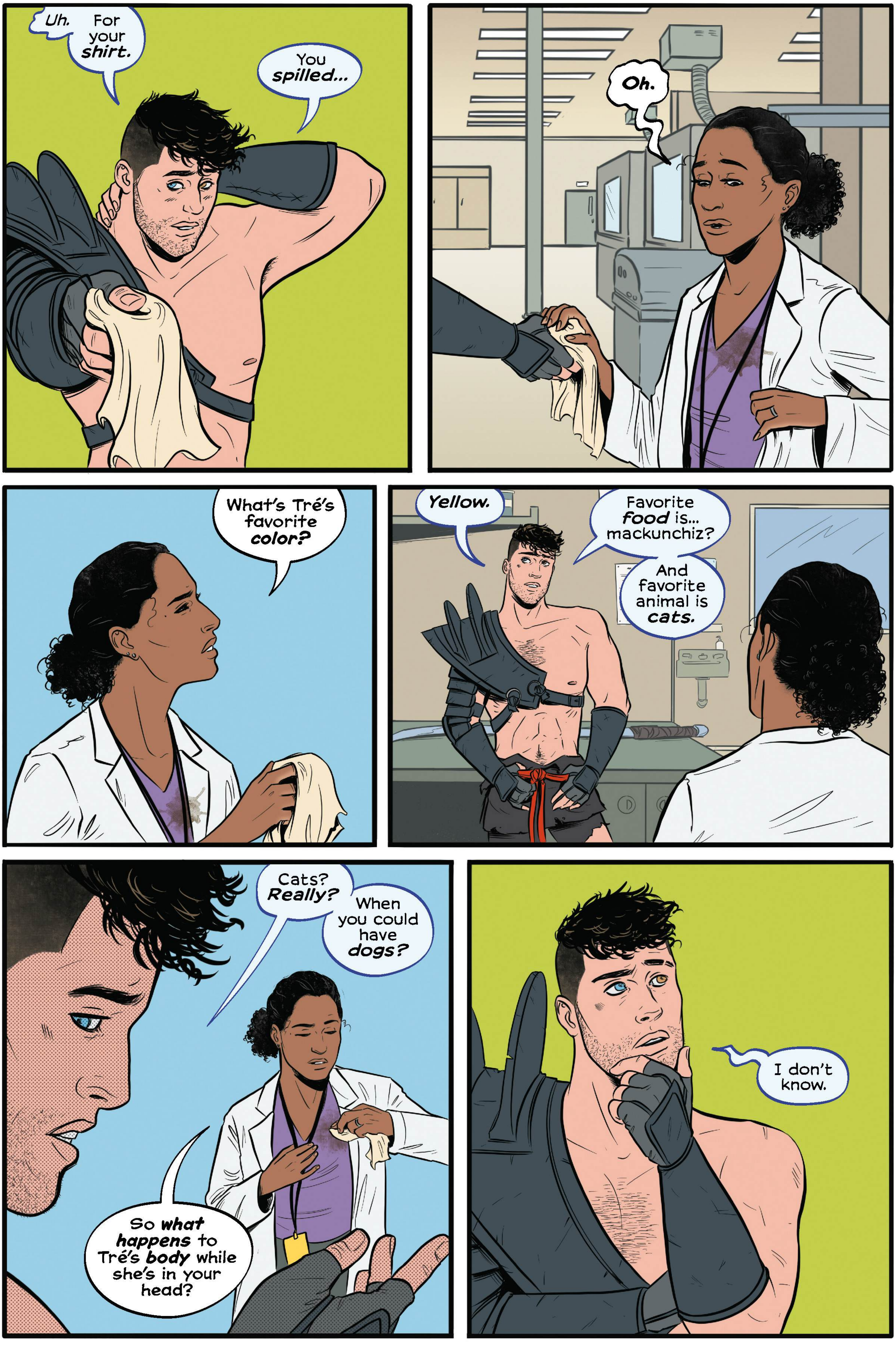

SO, uh...
...Hey, Mom.

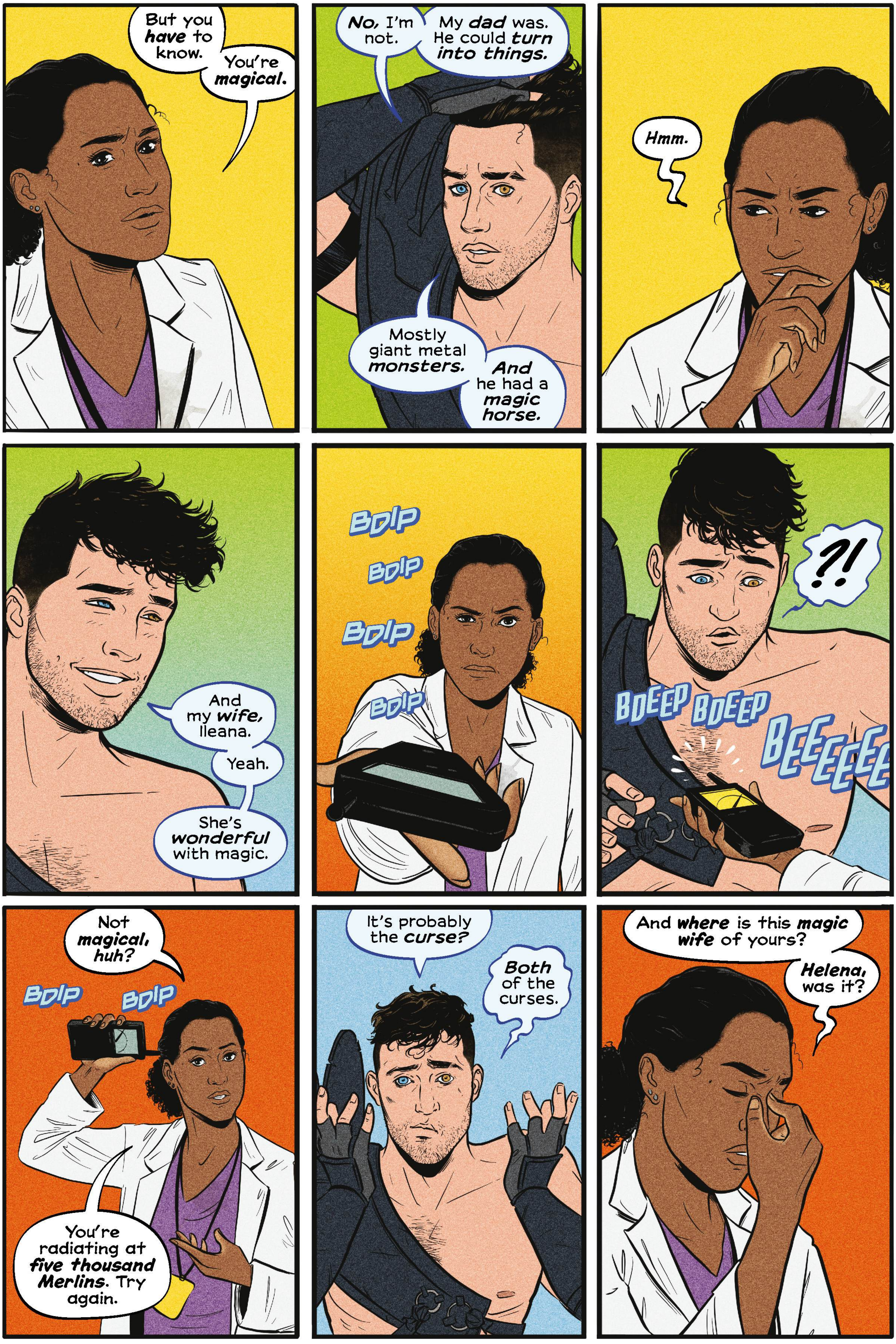

Whaaaaa?
...TRÉ?!

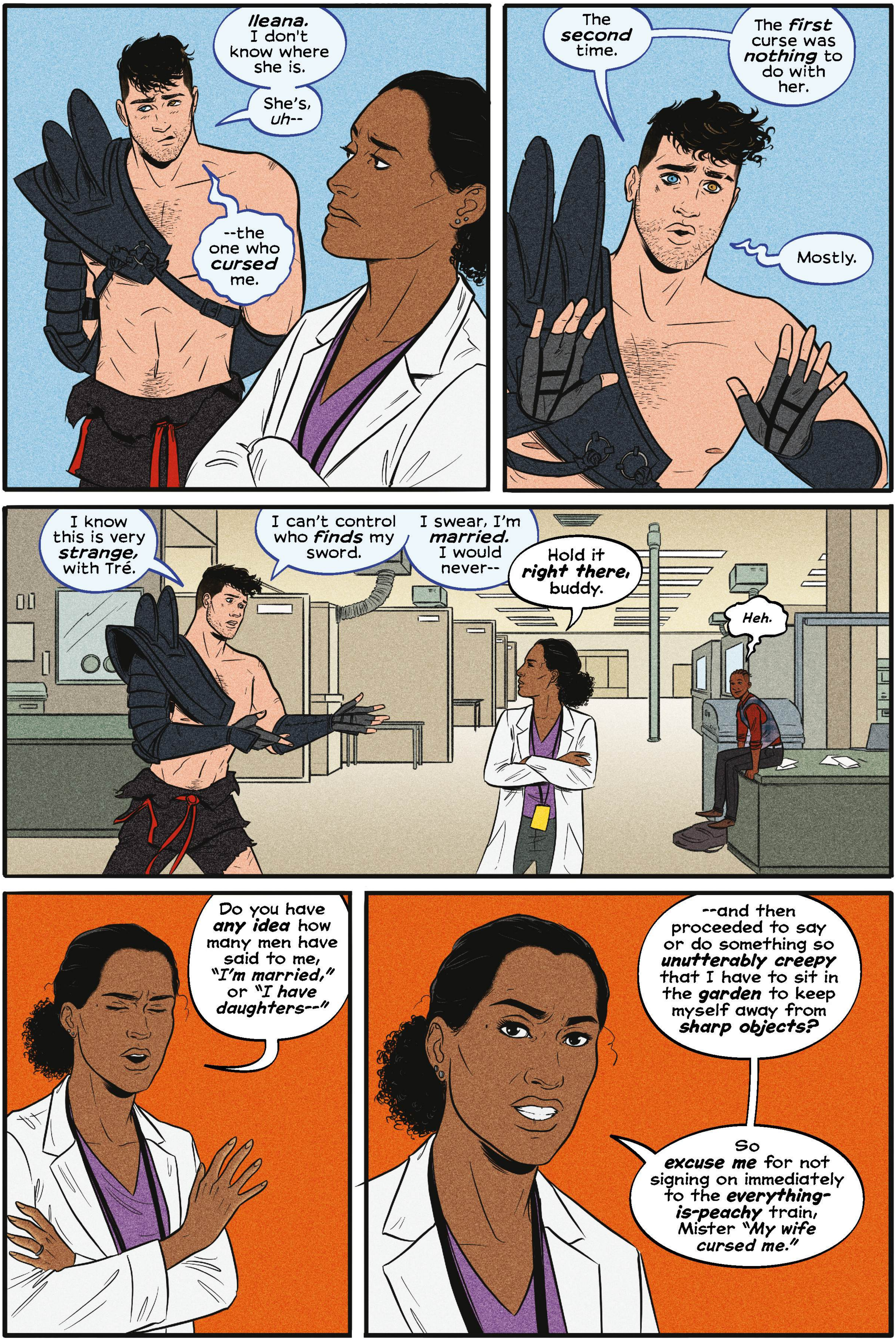

Yeah.
Like, surprise?
I mean, it's **Niko's** body...
...but it's me.
I'm just going to call **Security--**
Wait.
Who is Niko?
My **sister** can turn into a **white dude.**
Magic is **wild.**
Oh, he's **in here,** too.
But he lets **me** drive when he first comes out.
I am **not** cool with this at all.
I **really** think we should call **Security,** Dr. Grant.
IDK, it's kinda **rad...**

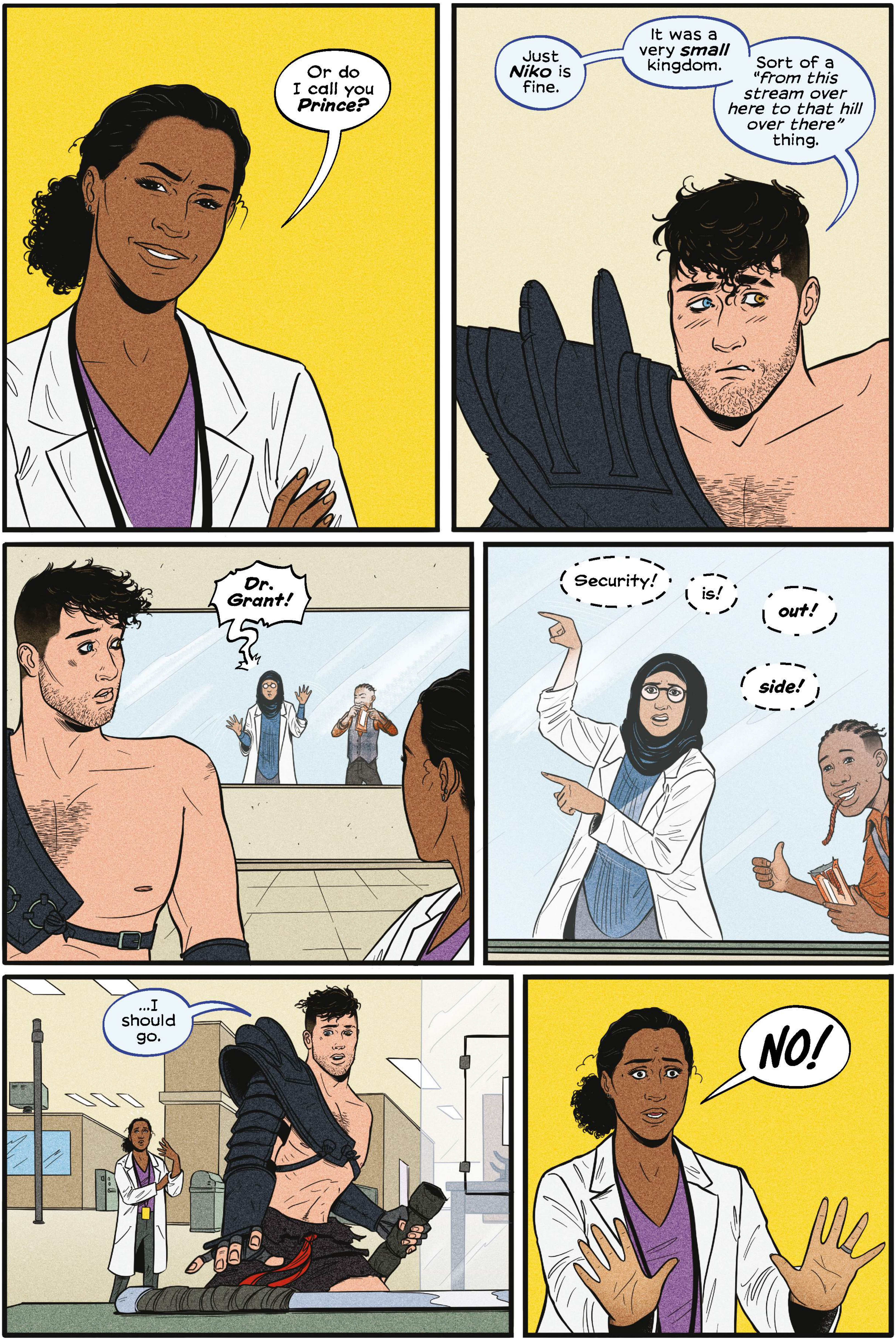

Aargh, Mom.
It's fiiine.
Niko, you drive.
Explain to Mom.
Niko?
Niko?!
Call Security.
Tell them to wait outside.
Thank you.
Ugh!
He's sulking.
≋sigh≋
Okay, listen, you!
You will talk to me about--
POKE
--Uh.

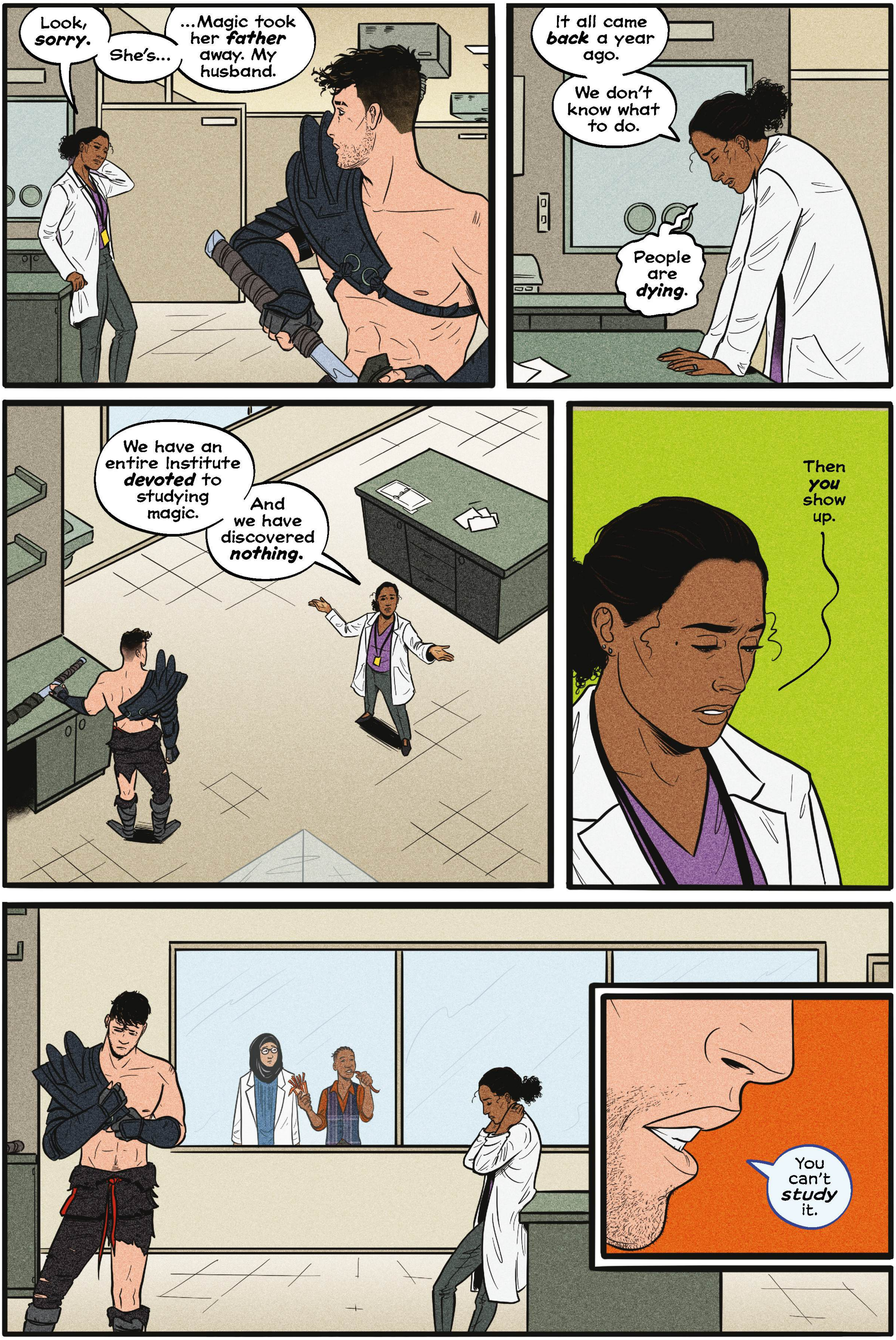

...
Niko Vulpe, a former prince of Oltenia.
At your service, madam.
Psst! It's Doctor.
Doctor madam.
Sorry.
...Former prince?
I don't know whether Oltenia still exists.
It was barely holding together when I was...
...Before I was cursed.

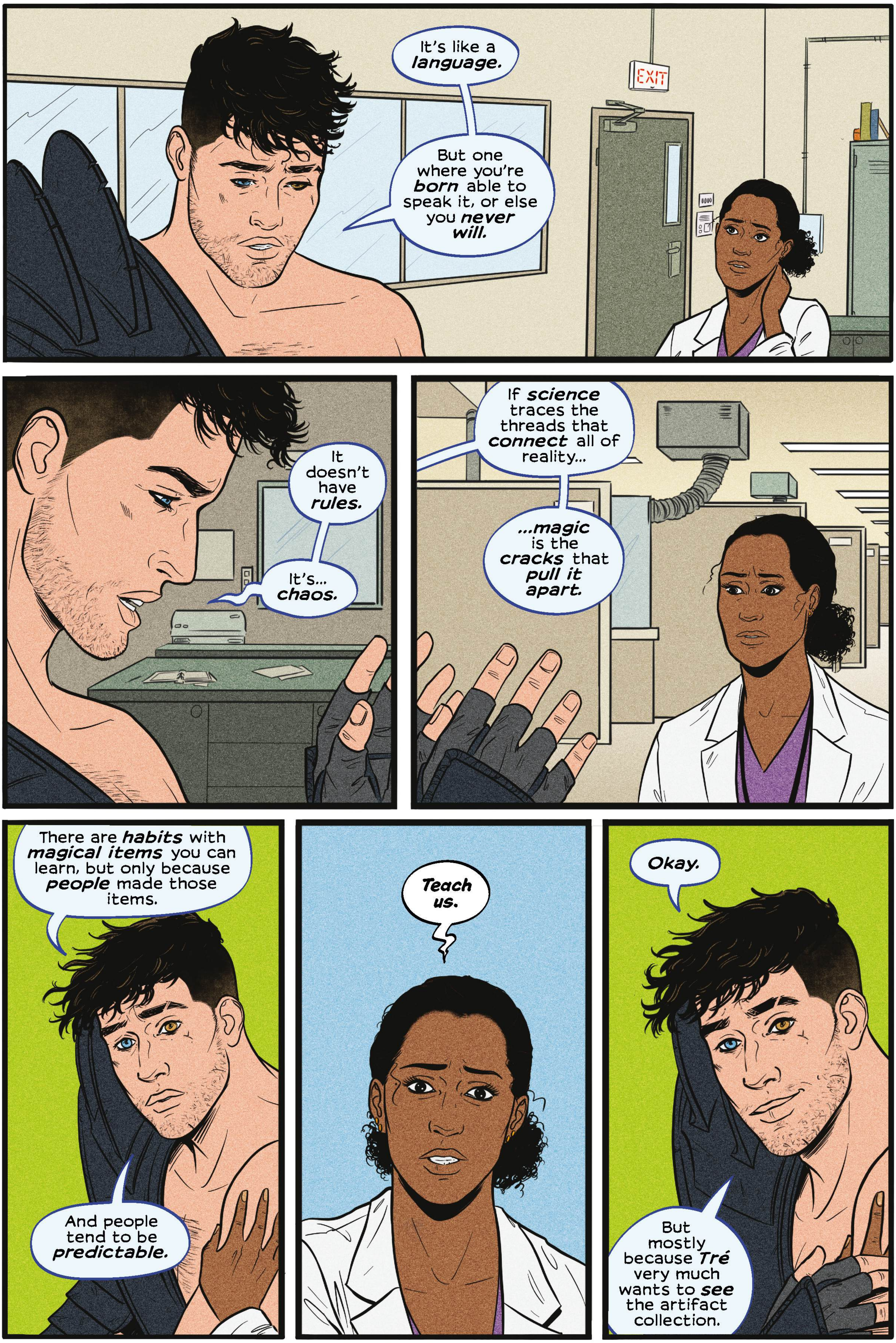

Uh. For your shirt.
You spilled...
Oh.
What's Tré's favorite color?
Yellow.
Favorite food is... mackunchiz?
And favorite animal is cats.
Cats? Really?
When you could have dogs?
So what happens to Tré's body while she's in your head?
I don't know.


But you *have* to know.
You're *magical.*
No, I'm not.
My *dad* was. He could *turn into things.*
Mostly giant metal *monsters.*
And he had a *magic horse.*
Hmm.
And my *wife,* Ileana.
Yeah.
She's *wonderful* with magic.
BDIP
BDIP
BDIP
BDIP
?!
BDEEP BDEEP
BEEEEEE
Not *magical, huh?*
BDIP BDIP
You're radiating at *five thousand Merlins.* Try again.
It's probably the *curse?*
Both of the curses.
And *where* is this *magic wife* of yours?
Helena, was it?


Ileana. I don't know where she is.
She's, *uh*--
--the one who *cursed* me.
The *second* time.
The *first* curse was *nothing* to do with her.
Mostly.
I know this is very *strange,* with Tré.
I can't control who *finds* my sword.
I swear, I'm *married.* I would never--
Hold it *right there,* buddy.
Heh.
Do you have *any idea* how many men have said to me, *"I'm married,"* or *"I have daughters--"*
--and then proceeded to say or do something so *unutterably creepy* that I have to sit in the *garden* to keep myself away from *sharp objects?*
So *excuse me* for not signing on immediately to the *everything-is-peachy* train, Mister *"My wife cursed me."*

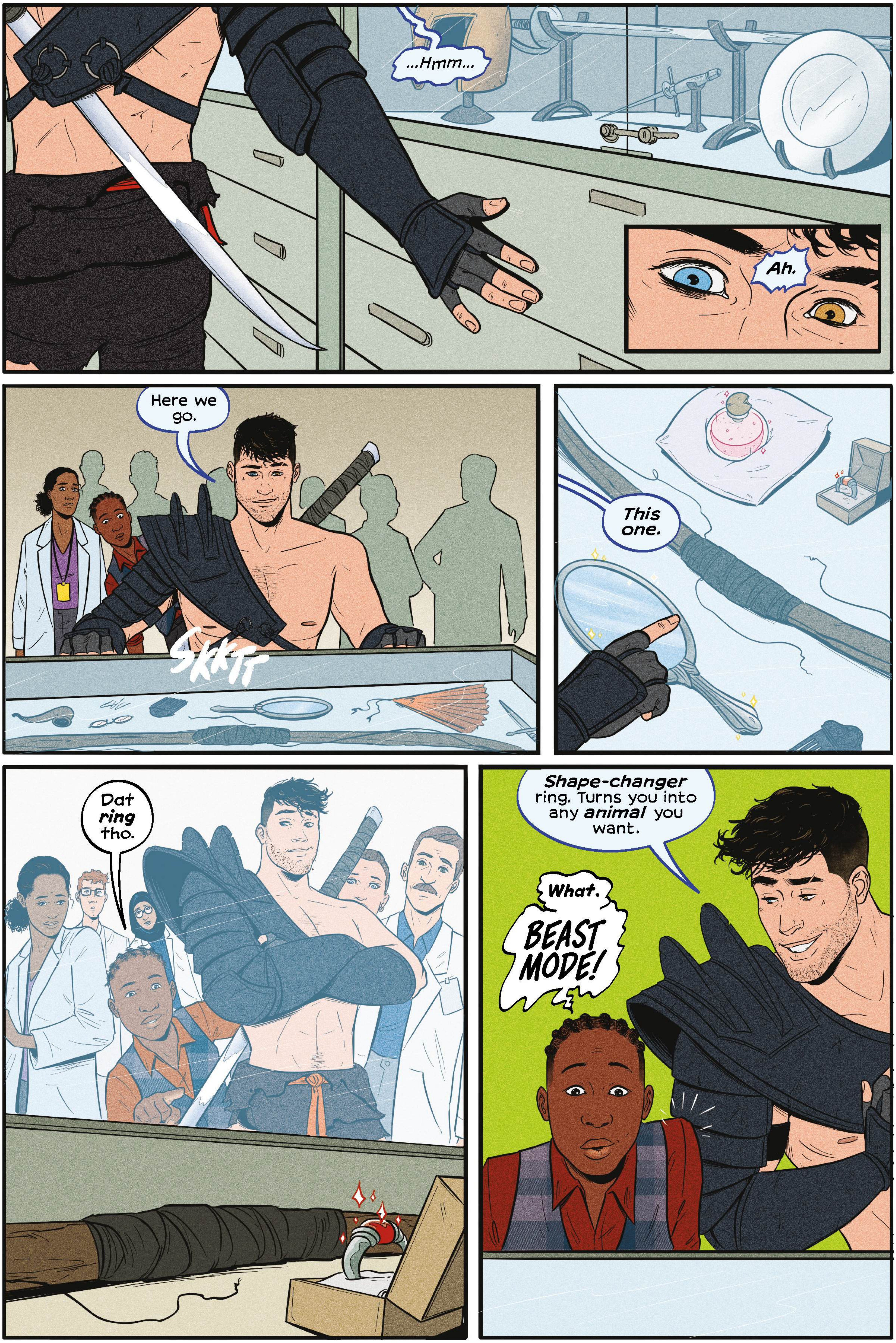

Or do I call you *Prince?*
Just **Niko** is fine.
It was a very ***small*** kingdom.
Sort of a *"from this stream over here to that hill over there"* thing.
Dr. Grant!
Security!
is!
out!
side!
...I should go.
NO!


Look, *sorry.*
She's...
...Magic took her *father* away. My husband.
It all came *back* a year ago.
We don't know what to do.
People are *dying.*
We have an entire Institute *devoted* to studying magic.
And we have discovered *nothing.*
Then *you* show up.
You can't *study* it.


It's like a *language.*
But one where you're *born* able to speak it, or else you *never will.*
It doesn't have *rules.*
It's... *chaos.*
If *science* traces the threads that *connect* all of reality...
...magic is the *cracks* that *pull it apart.*
There are *habits* with *magical items* you can learn, but only because *people* made those items.
And people tend to be *predictable.*
Teach us.
Okay.
But mostly because *Tré* very much wants to *see* the artifact collection.

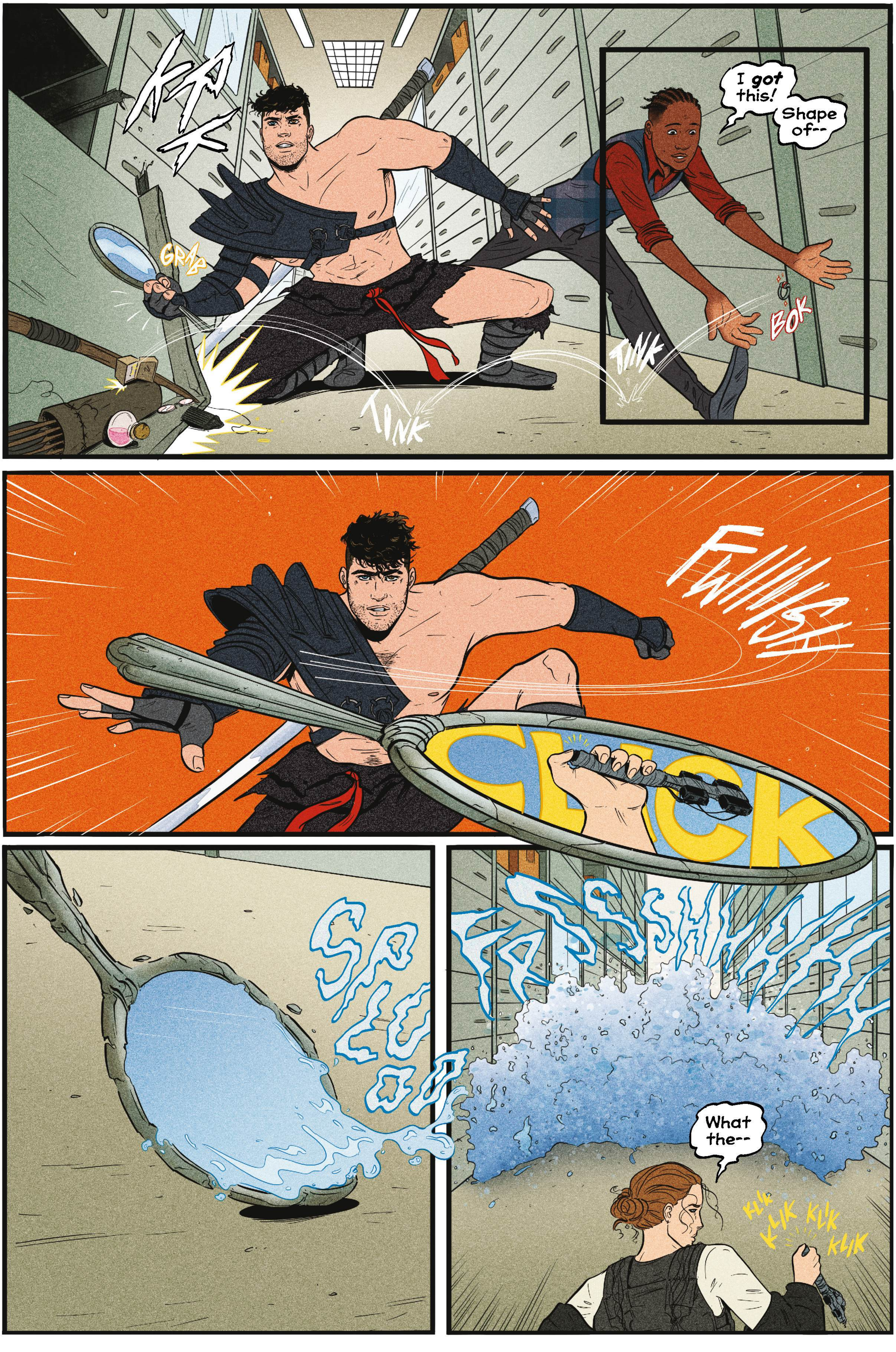
Everyone, this is Niko.
He's going to be helping us with some of the artifact identification.
ANTHONY! No touching.
Ooh!
Ooh!
Dr. Grant!
Can we look at the bow that was found yesterday?
I'm not quite done cleaning it, but it's magnificent--
Sure, Ian. Why not.
Niko?

Isn't she a *beaut?*
No.
The *first* thing you have to *understand* is that magical beings love *mischief.*
They make shiny *trinkets* like *that* so people like *you* pick them up.
And then *die* HORRIBLY.
Oh.
Now, if you want a *bow...*


...Hmm...
Ah.
Here we go.
SKKTT
This one.
Dat *ring* tho.
Shape-changer ring. Turns you into any *animal* you want.
What.
BEAST MODE!

The *mirror* turns into a *lake,* if you throw it.
My *wife* had one like it.
Probably a *love* potion.
Always a terrible idea.
To use *any* of these, you have to believe *completely* in magic.
And your *intent* needs to be *strong* and *clear* in your min
STOP HER!
I CAN'T-- SHE'S--
GET OFF!
I HAVE A MISSION!
EXIT
I'M GOING TO END MAGIC!

I'm going to *blow* it all back where it *came* from.
KRAK
ANTHONY! GET OUT!
AAAH!
Dude! What are you *doing?*
A BOMB!
Breath of fire.
Hnnngk--

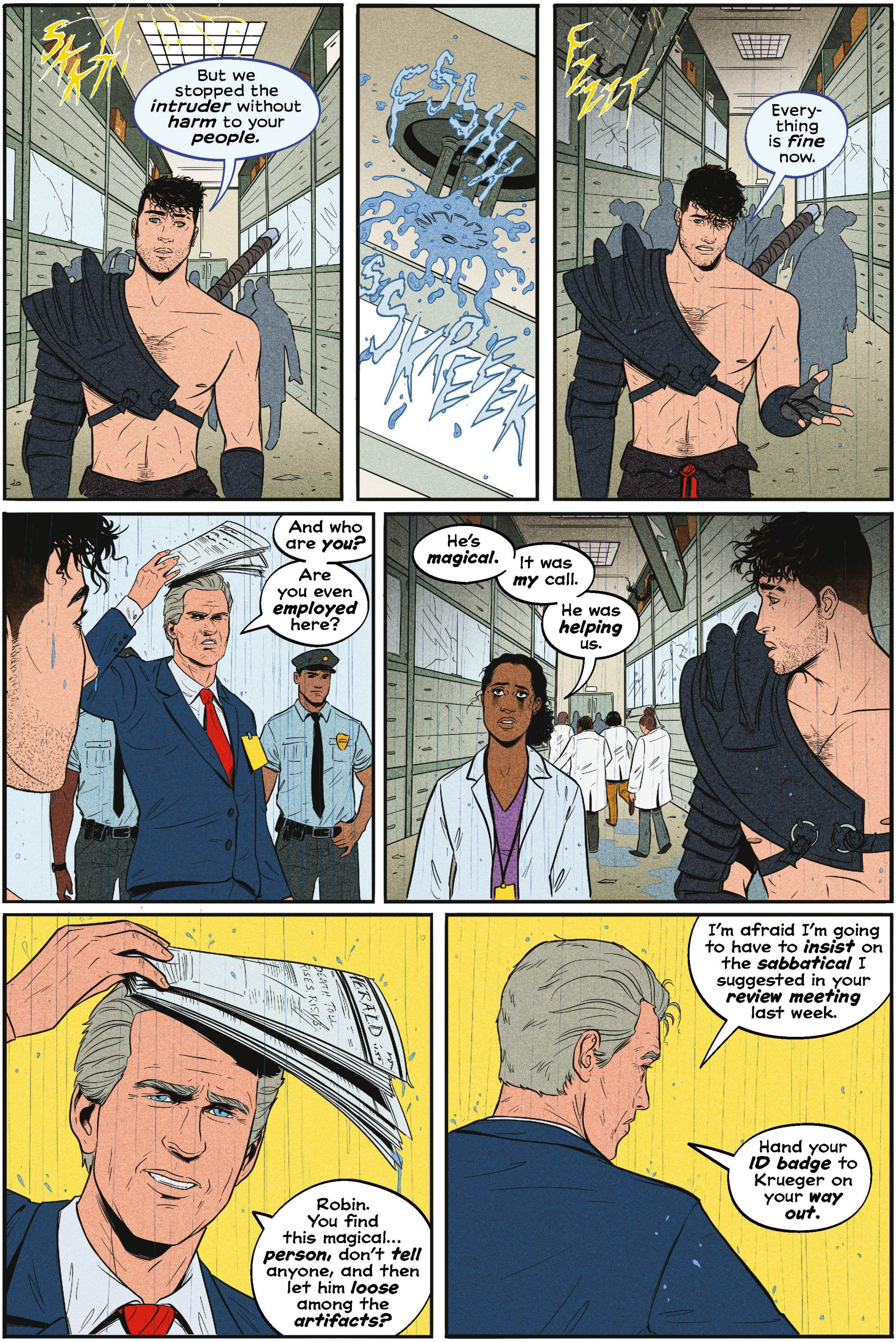

KRAK
GRAB
TINK
I got this!
Shape of--
TINK
BOK
FWUSH
CLICK
SPLOOOO
FRSSSHHHKKK
What the--
KLIK KLIK KLIK KLIK

KLIK KLIK KLIK KLIK KLIK KLIK KLIK KLIK KLIK KLIK KLIK KLIK KLIK KLIK KLIK KLIK KLIK KLIK KLIK KLIK KLIK KLIK

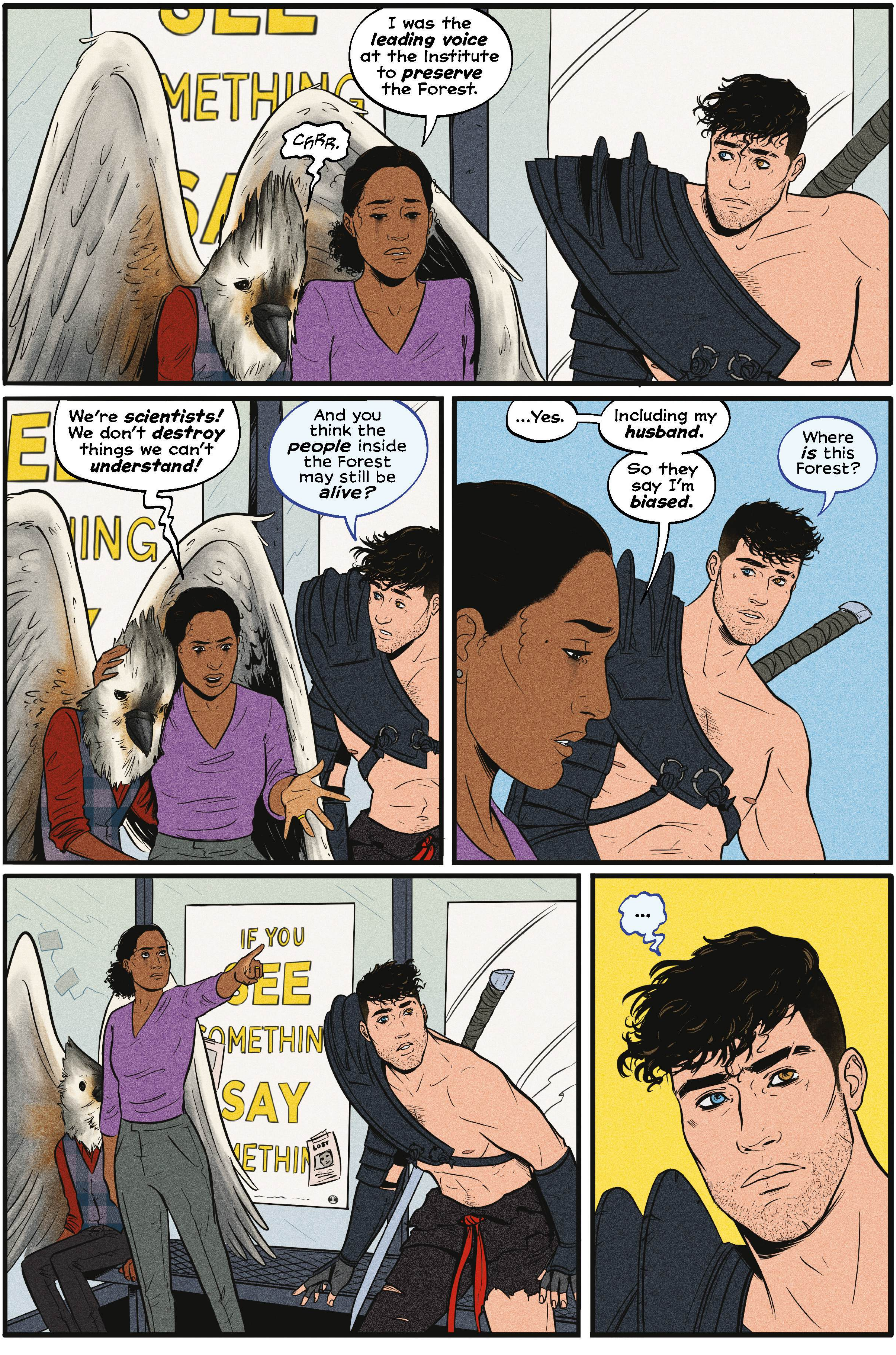
SSHHF SSHHF
BLURP

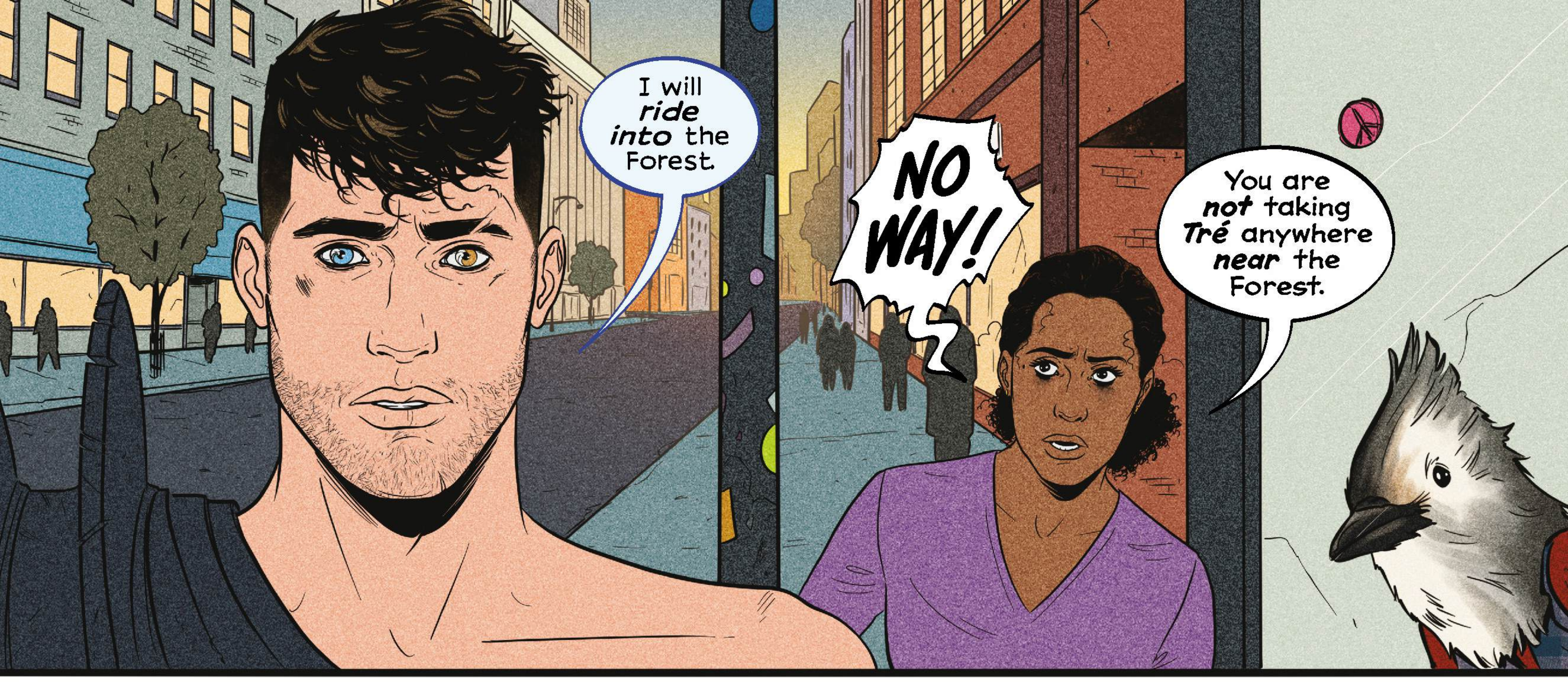
...
We're okay, but yeah, you should probably come down and see this.
Anthony?
Has anyone seen my son?
ANTHONY!
We can't be expected to work like this--
ANTHONY!

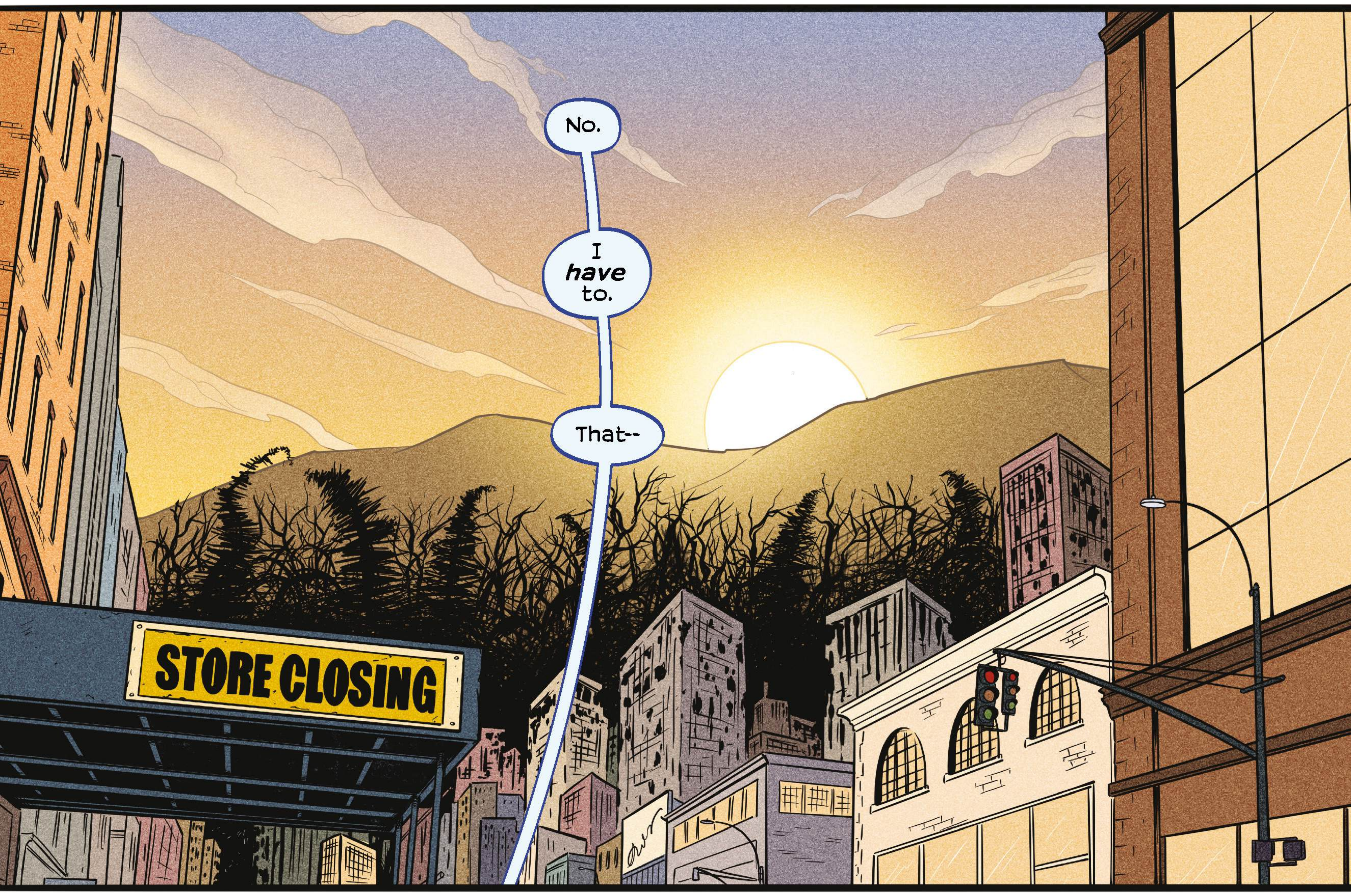
CHIRRUP?
...Anthony?
FIX! THIS!
I... ...can't.
What in blazes is happening here?
Where did all this water come from?
Don't worry, Anthony.
We'll find a way to turn you back.
CHRP!
Uh...
...me?

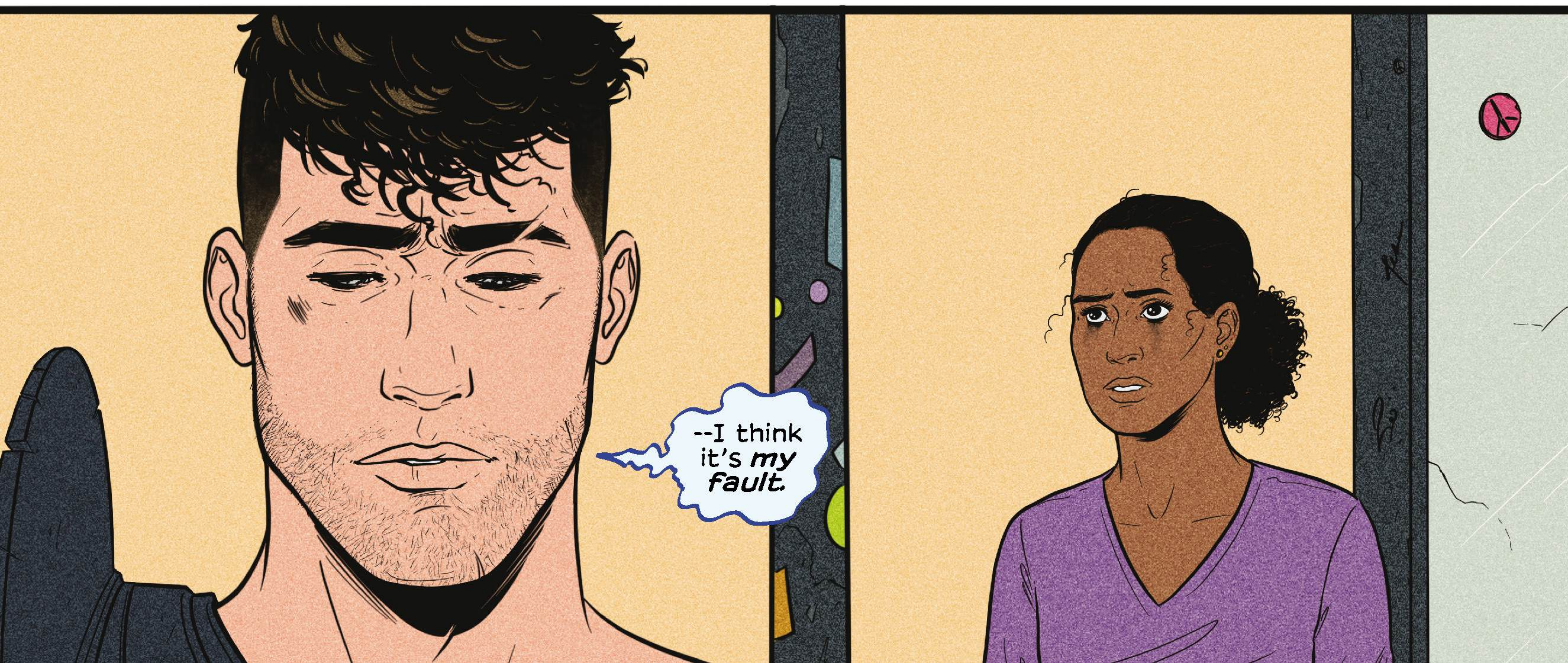

SKKZT!
But we stopped the *intruder* without *harm* to your *people.*
FSSHH
SSKREEEK
FZZZT
Everything is *fine* now.
And who are *you?*
Are you even *employed* here?
He's *magical.*
It was *my* call.
He was *helping* us.
DEATH TOLL RISES
HERALD
Robin. You find this magical... *person,* don't *tell* anyone, and then let him *loose* among the *artifacts?*
I'm afraid I'm going to have to *insist* on the *sabbatical* I suggested in your *review meeting* last week.
Hand your *ID badge* to Krueger on your *way out.*

Well, this has been about the worst day ever.
I'm sorry.
It's not even about you, Niko.
It's stupid Institute politics.
REPORT ALL MAGICAL ACTIVITY TO CPS
It's about the Forest.
A year ago, when the ley lines reversed, part of the forest changed.
People go in, but don't come back out.
Only monsters do.
The dragon?
Yeah.
The only thing stopping the city from razing the Forest is that it's a national park.
But they're petitioning Congress.
Chk.
And pressuring the Institute to come out in favor of its destruction.

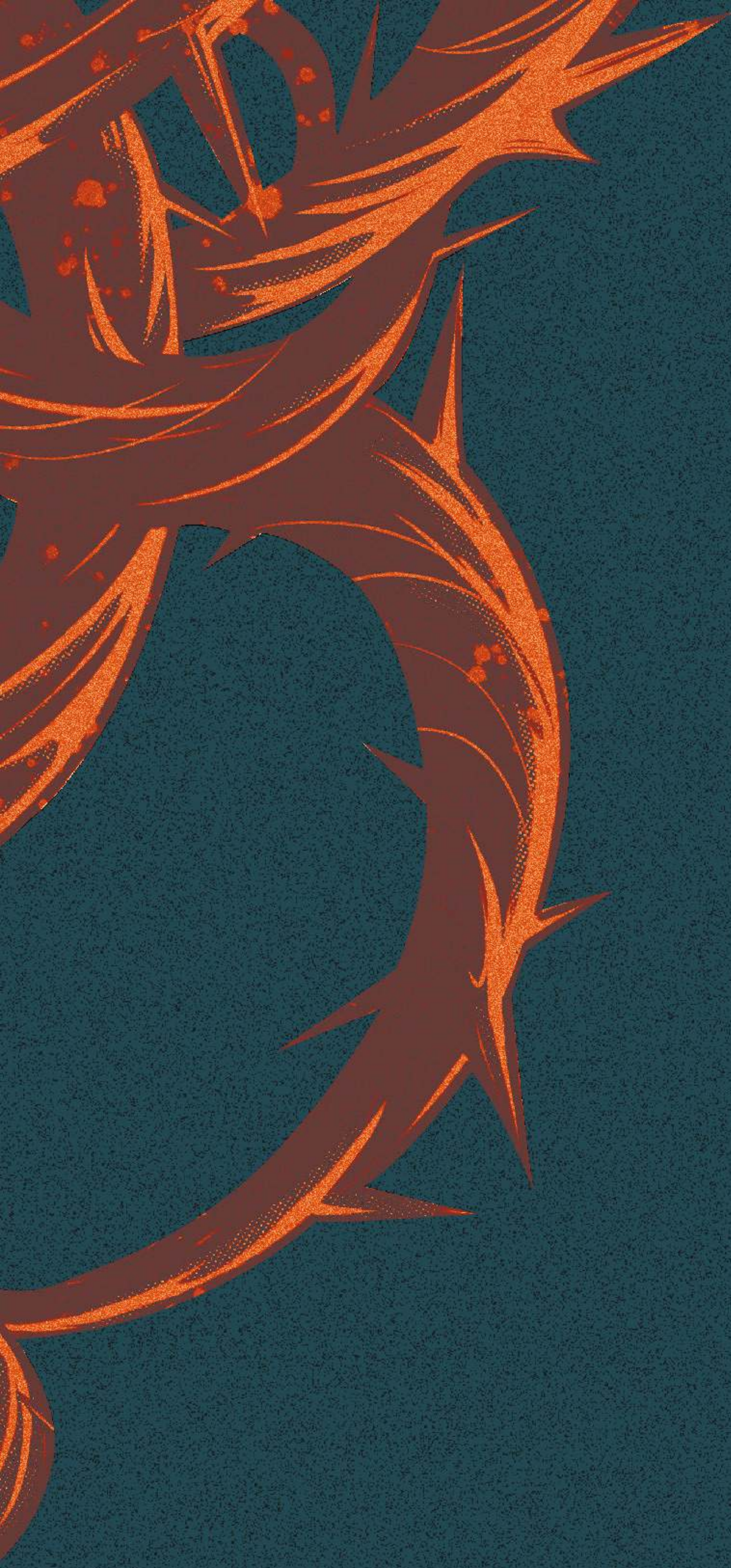

I was the *leading voice* at the Institute to *preserve* the Forest.
CRRR.
We're *scientists!* We don't *destroy* things we can't *understand!*
And you think the *people* inside the Forest may still be *alive?*
...Yes.
Including my *husband*.
So they say I'm *biased*.
Where *is* this Forest?
IF YOU SEE OMETHIN SAY ETHIN
LOST
...

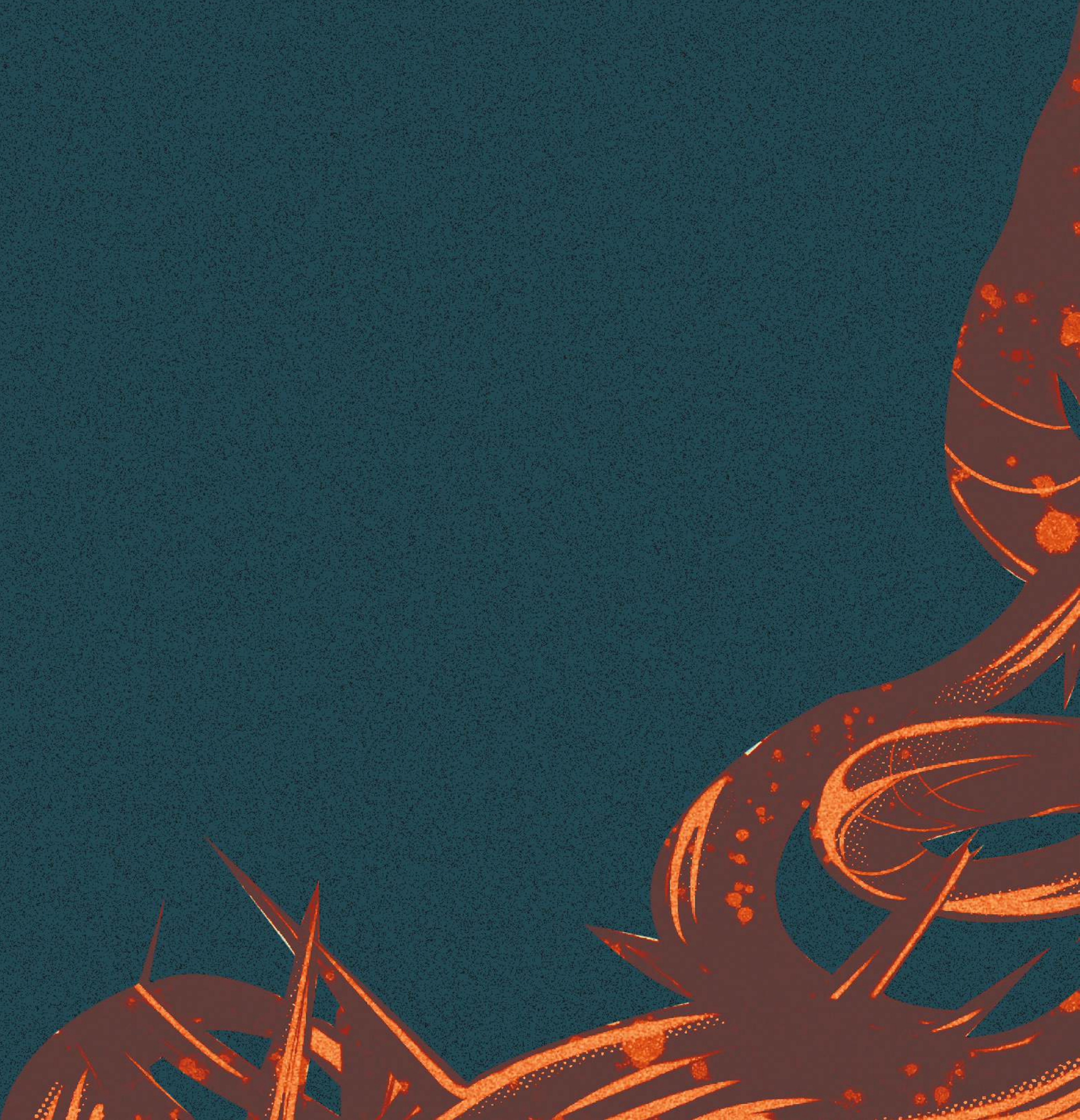

I will *ride into* the Forest.
NO WAY!
You are *not* taking *Tré* anywhere *near* the Forest.

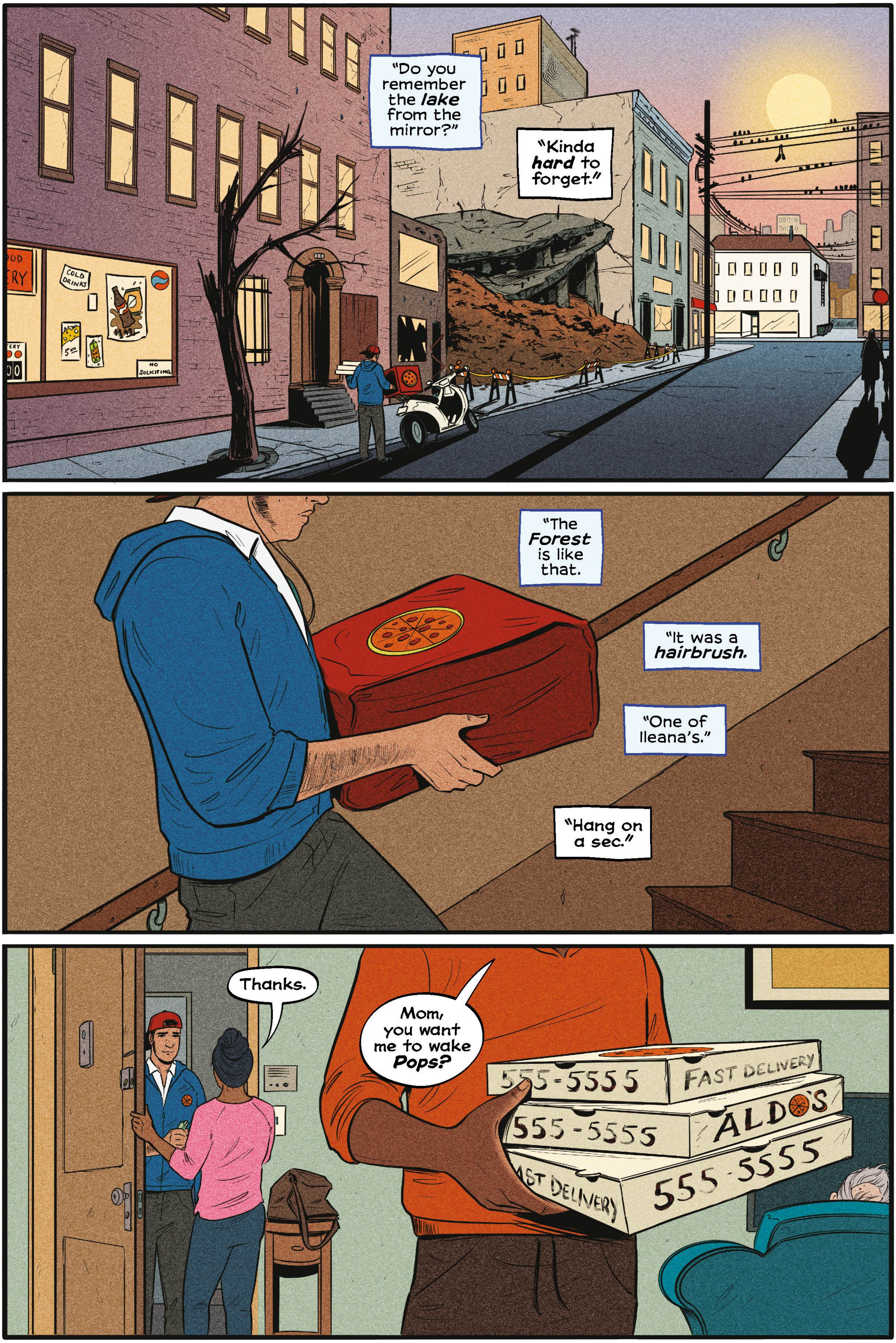

No.
I *have* to.
That--
STORE CLOSING

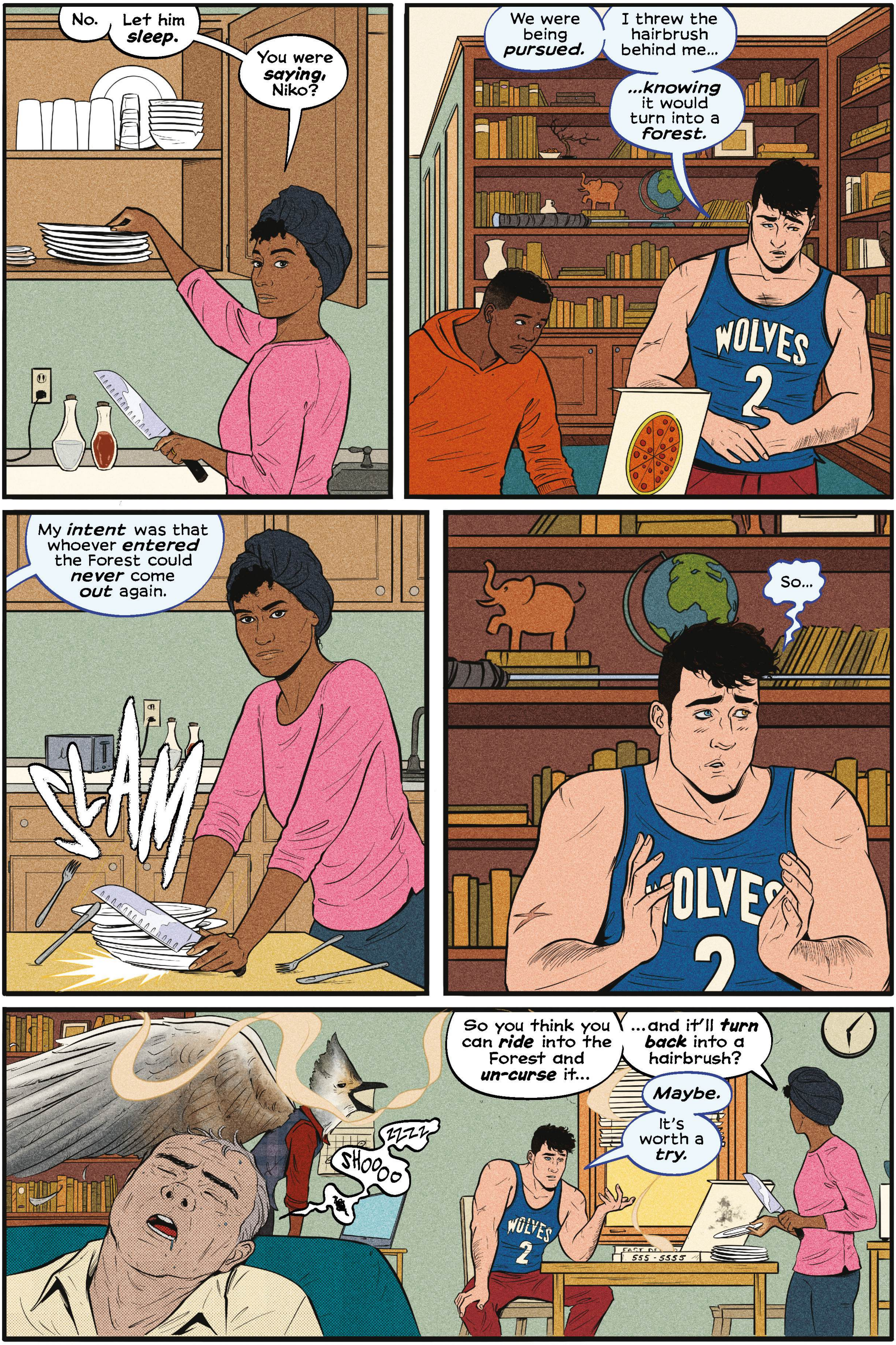

--I think it's *my fault.*

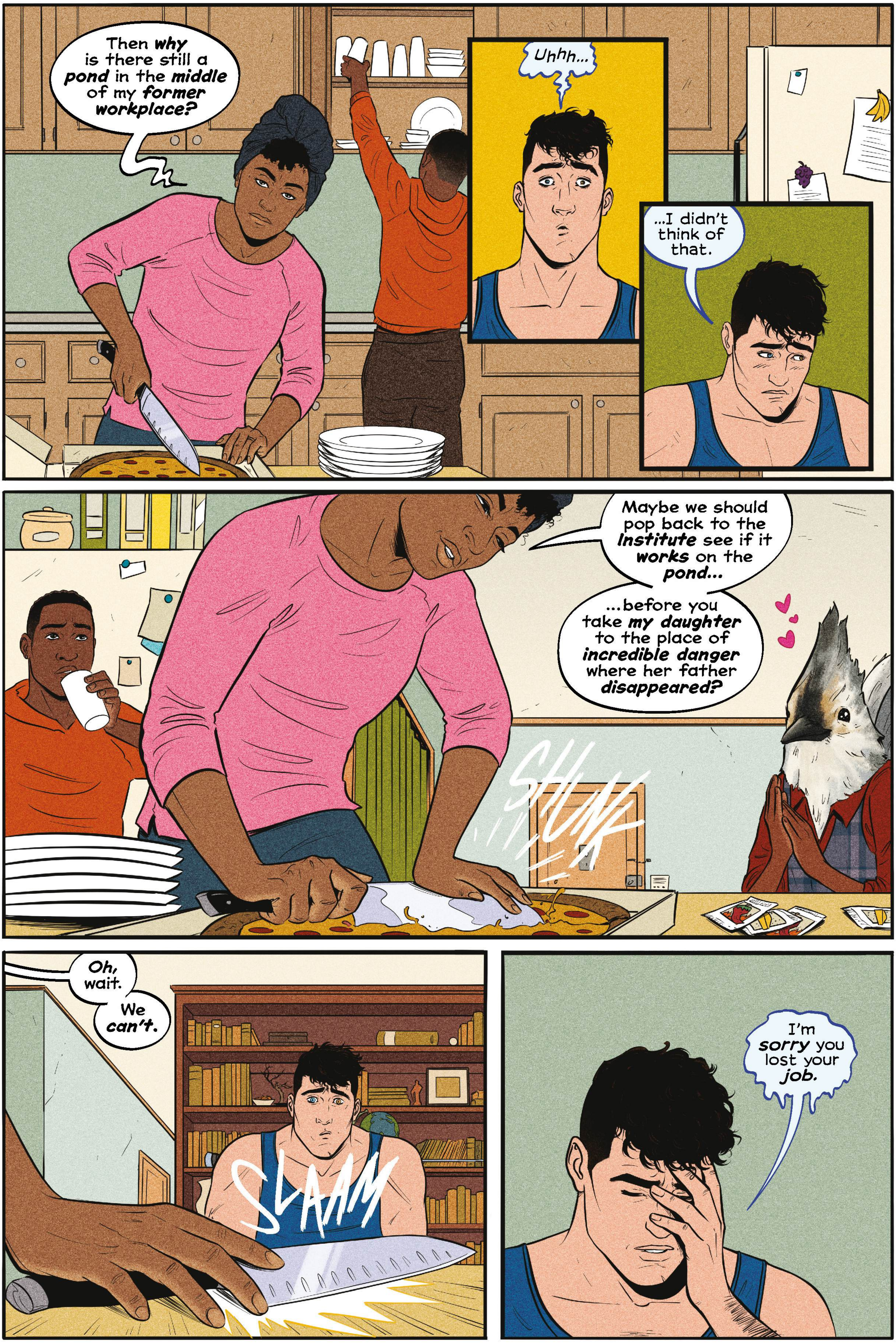
3

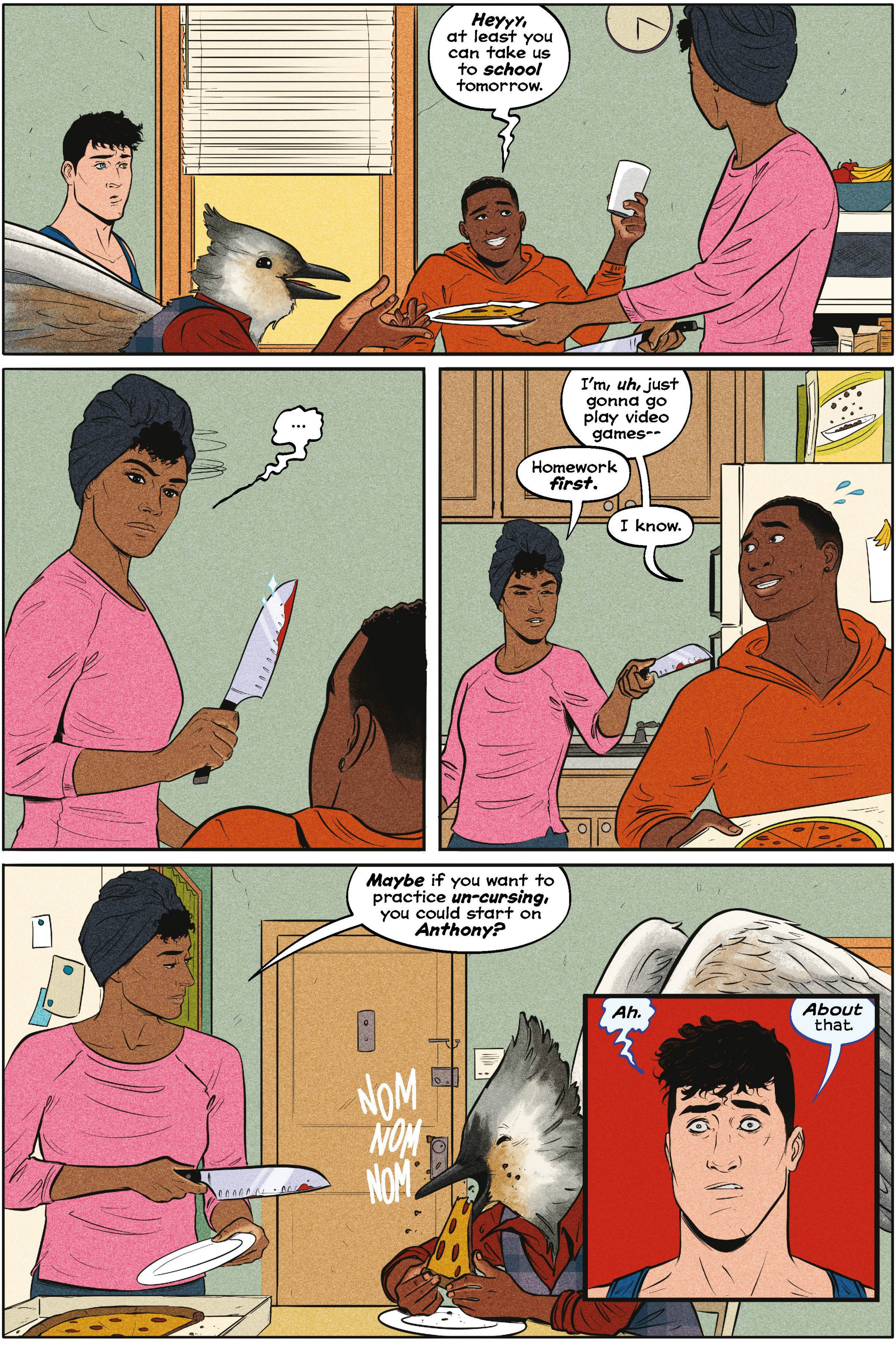


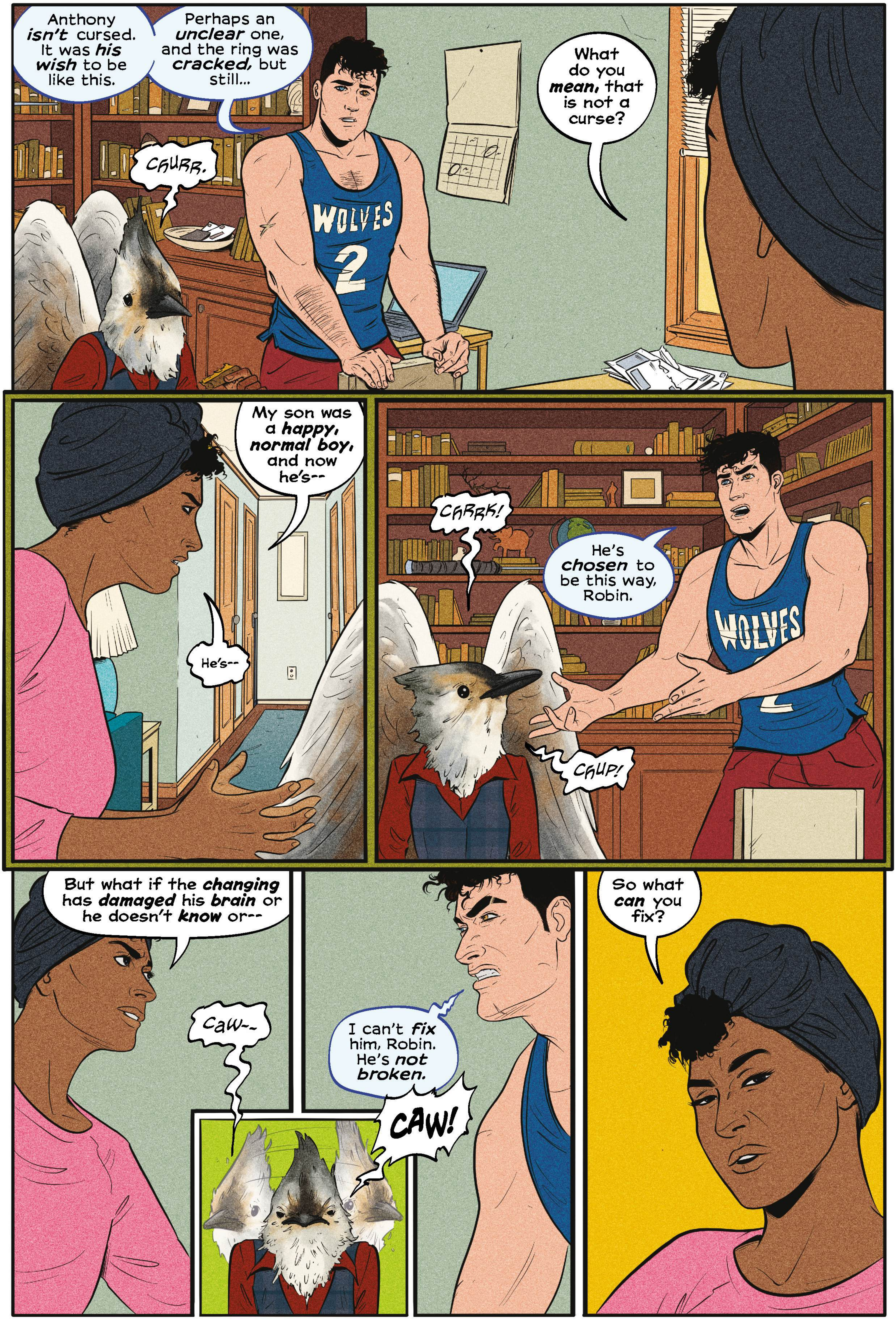



"Do you remember the *lake* from the mirror?"
"Kinda **hard** to forget."
COLD DRINKS
NO SOLICITING
"The *Forest* is like that.
"It was a *hairbrush.*
"One of Ileana's."
"Hang on a sec."
Thanks.
Mom, you want me to wake *Pops?*
555-5555
FAST DELIVERY
ALDO'S
555-5555
555-5555
FAST DELIVERY

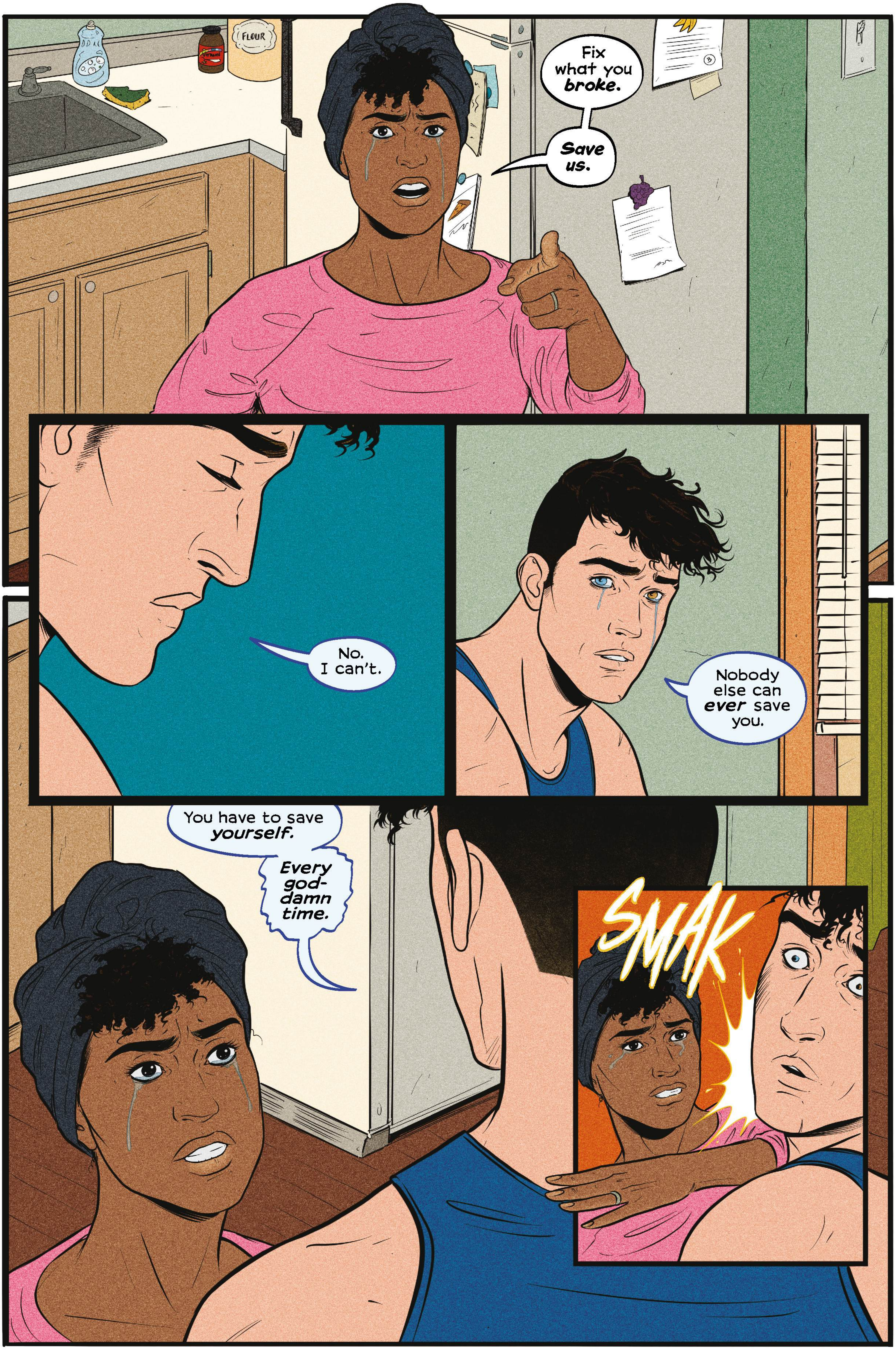

No.
Let him *sleep.*
You were *saying,* Niko?
We were being *pursued.*
I threw the hairbrush behind me...
...knowing it would turn into a *forest.*
My *intent* was that whoever *entered* the Forest could *never* come *out* again.
SLAM
So...
So you think you can *ride* into the Forest and *un-curse* it...
...and it'll *turn back* into a hairbrush?
Maybe.
It's worth a *try.*
ZZZZ
SHOOOO
WOLVES 2
555 - 5555

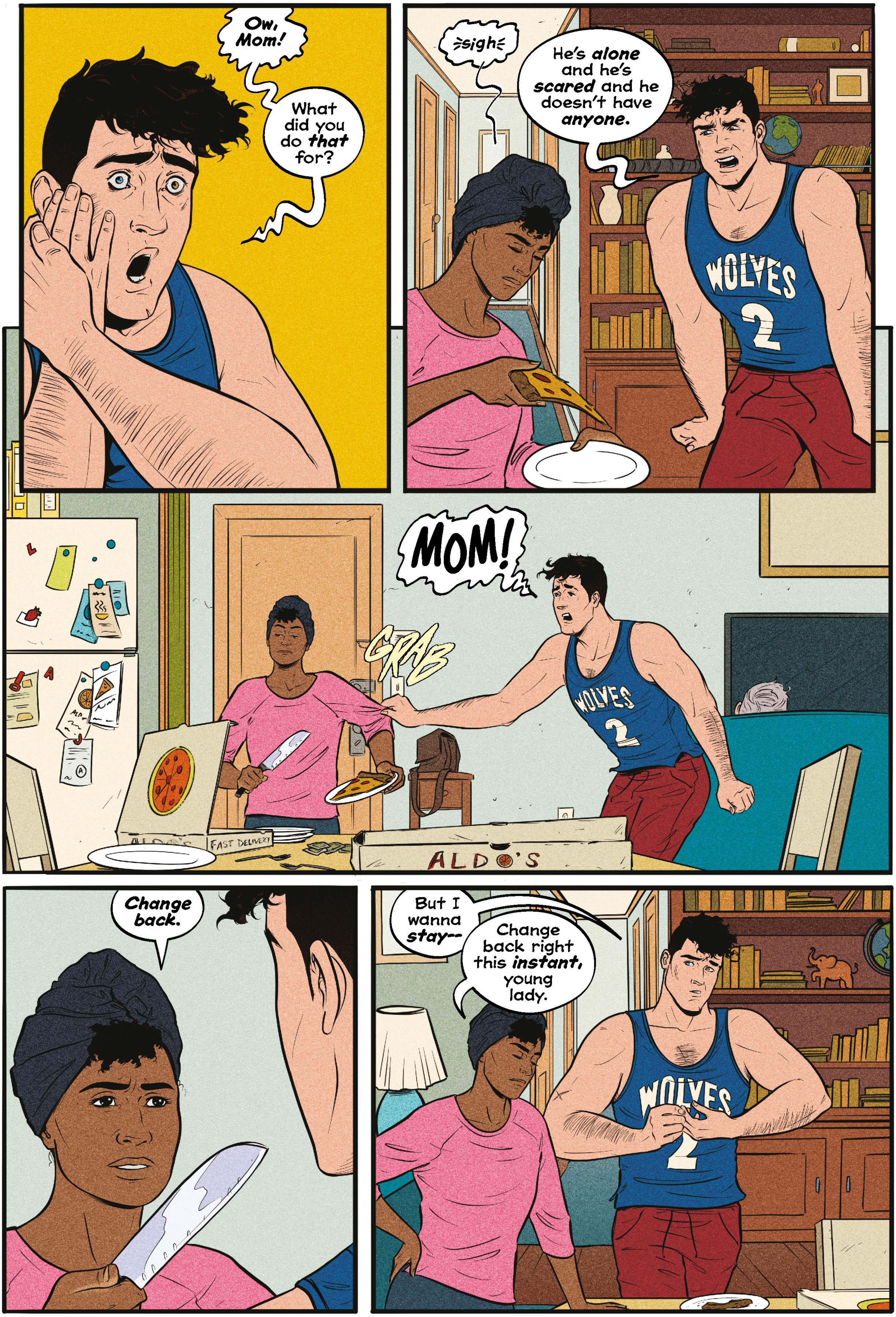

Then why is there still a pond in the middle of my former workplace?
Uhhh...
...I didn't think of that.
Maybe we should pop back to the Institute see if it works on the pond...
...before you take my daughter to the place of incredible danger where her father disappeared?
SHUNK
Oh, wait.
We can't.
SLAAM
I'm sorry you lost your job.

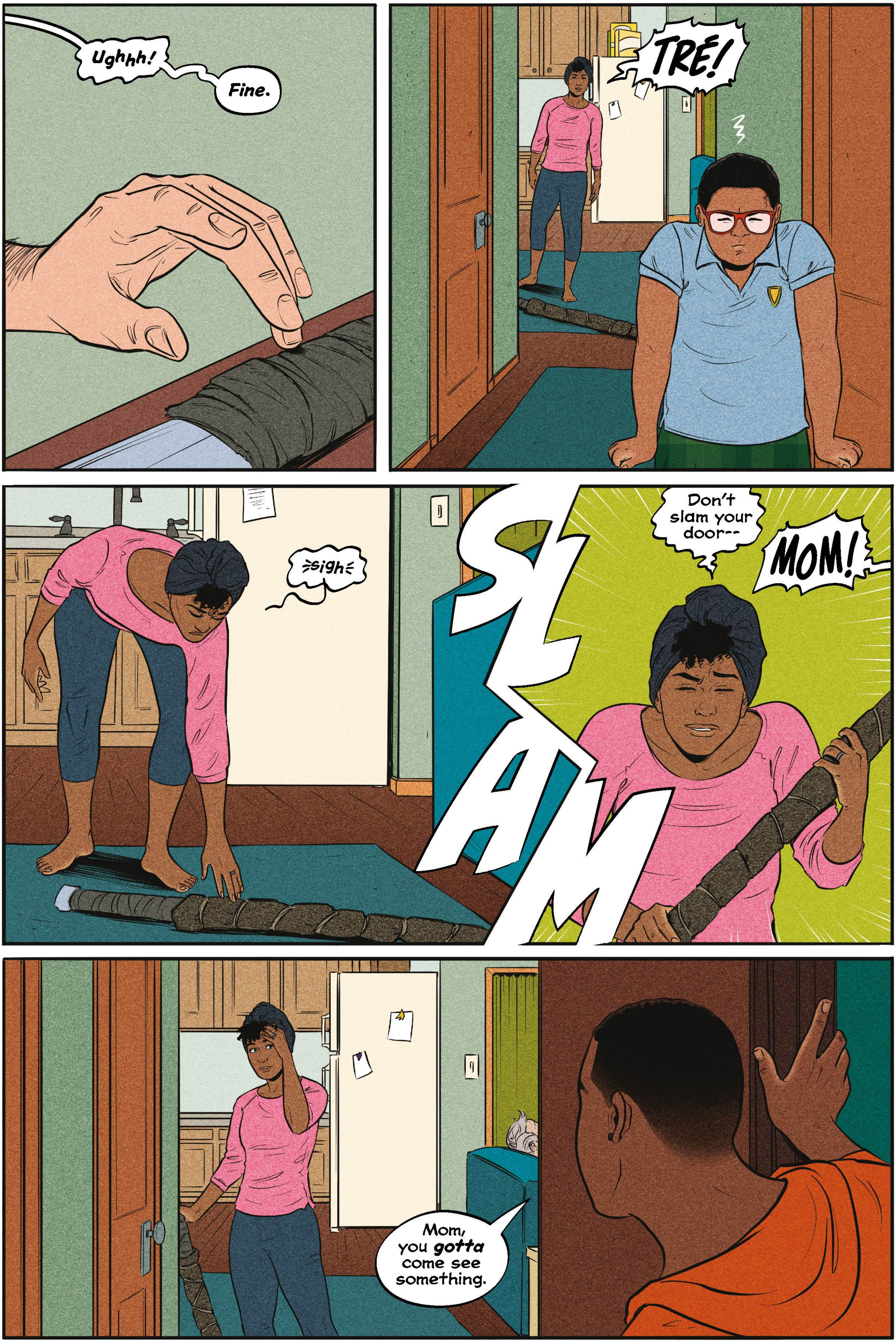

Heyyy, at least you can take us to school tomorrow.
...
I'm, uh, just gonna go play video games--
Homework first.
I know.
Maybe if you want to practice un-cursing, you could start on Anthony?
NOM NOM NOM
Ah.
About that.


Anthony *isn't* cursed. It was *his wish* to be like this.
Perhaps an *unclear* one, and the ring was *cracked,* but still...
CHURR.
What do you *mean,* that is not a curse?
My son was a *happy, normal boy,* and now he's--
He's--
CRRRK!
He's *chosen* to be this way, Robin.
CHUP!
But what if the *changing* has *damaged* his *brain* or he doesn't *know* or--
CAW--
I can't *fix* him, Robin. He's *not broken.*
CAW!
So what *can* you fix?

NOTHING!
BAM
CARR...
I don't know what you *expect* of me.


FLOUR
Fix what you broke.
Save us.
No. I can't.
Nobody else can ever save you.
You have to save yourself.
Every god-damn time.
SMAK


Ow, Mom!
What did you do *that* for?
≈sigh≈
He's *alone* and he's *scared* and he doesn't have *anyone.*
MOM!
GRAB
WOLVES 2
FAST DELIVERY
ALDO'S
Change back.
But I wanna *stay*--
Change back right this *instant,* young lady.

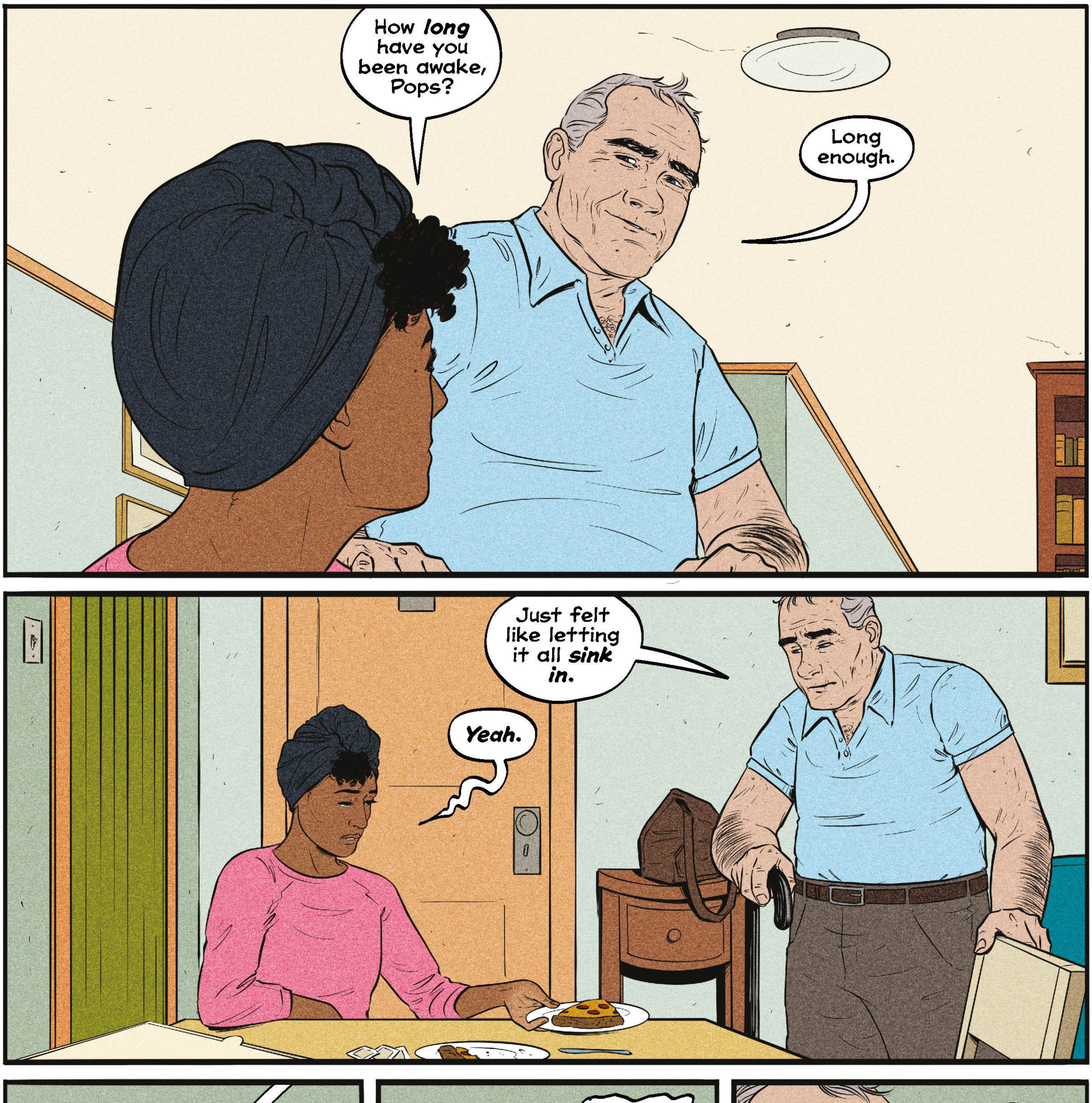

Ughhh!
Fine.
TRÉ!
sigh
SLAM
Don't slam your door--
MOM!
Mom, you *gotta* come see something.

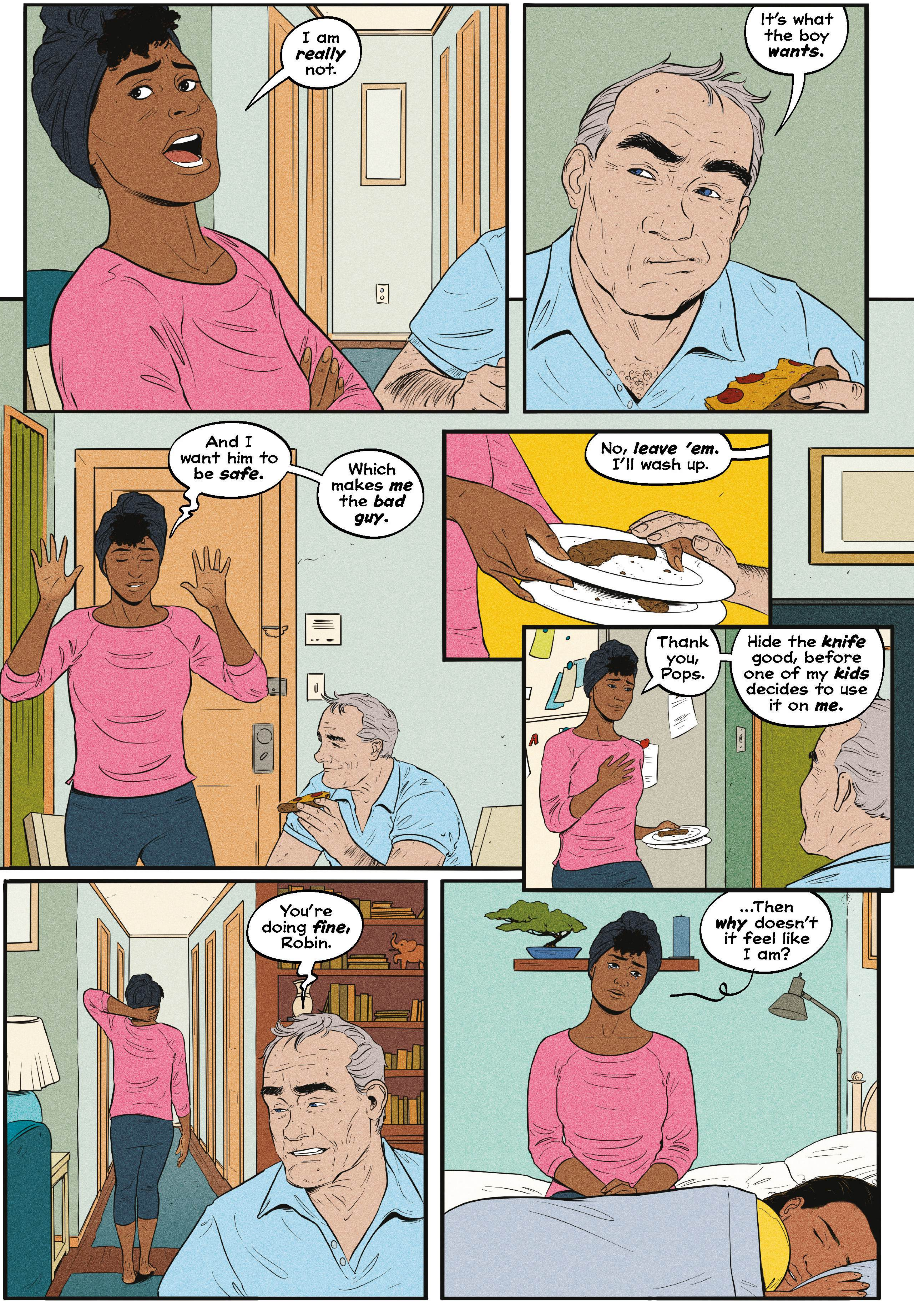
REPORT
Look.
CAR.
FAST DELIVERY
ALDO'S

Mom chill out
I am okay
I am happy

Oh.
Oh.
Oh god.
How do I even *hug* you?
Will it *hurt* if I--
CHURR.

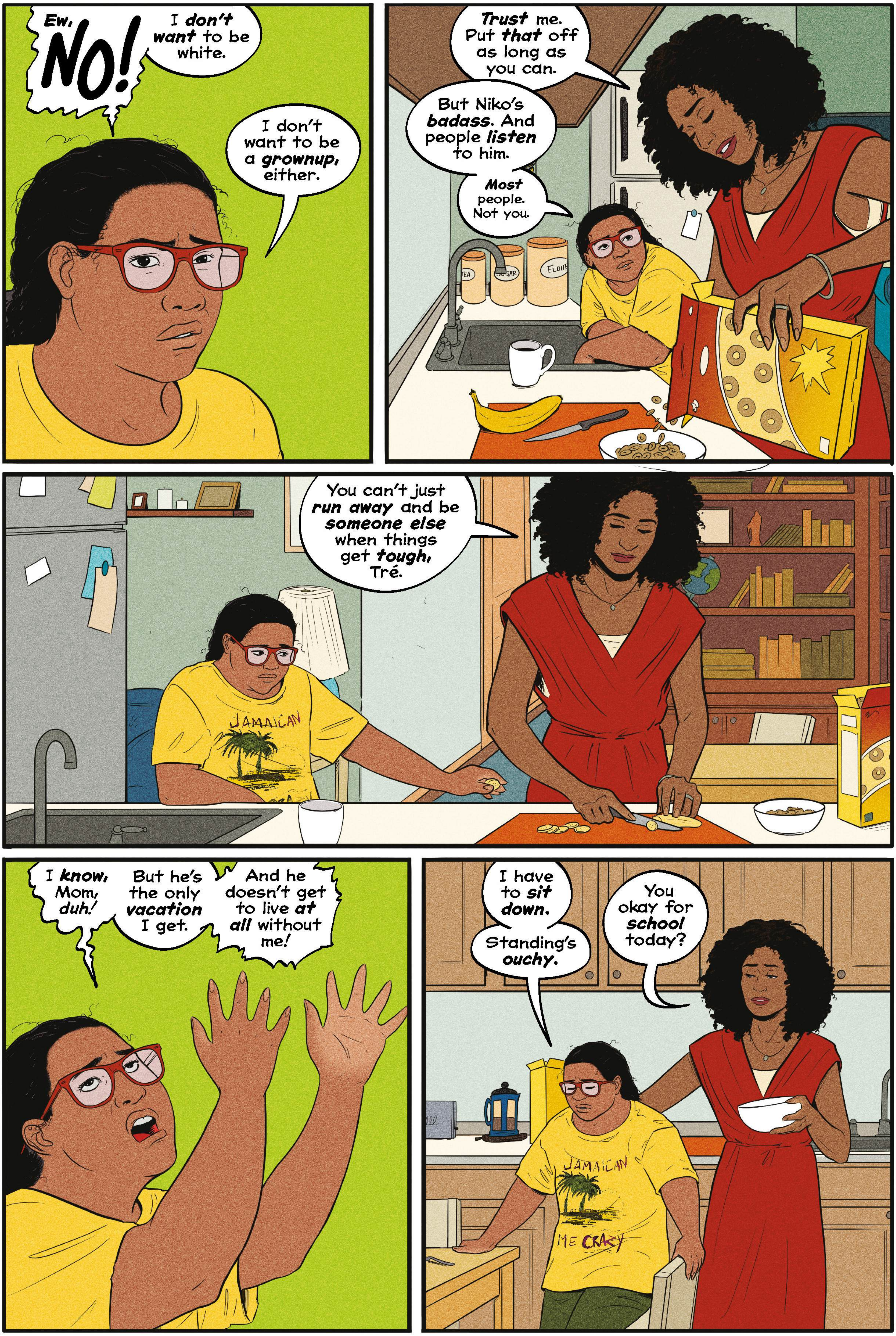
I love you, Son.
But you both **still** have to be in **bed** in **thirty minutes.**
AWWW!
NO P
...
ALDO'S
FAST DELIVERY
sigh
Any **pepperoni** left, or did the **wolves** eat it all?

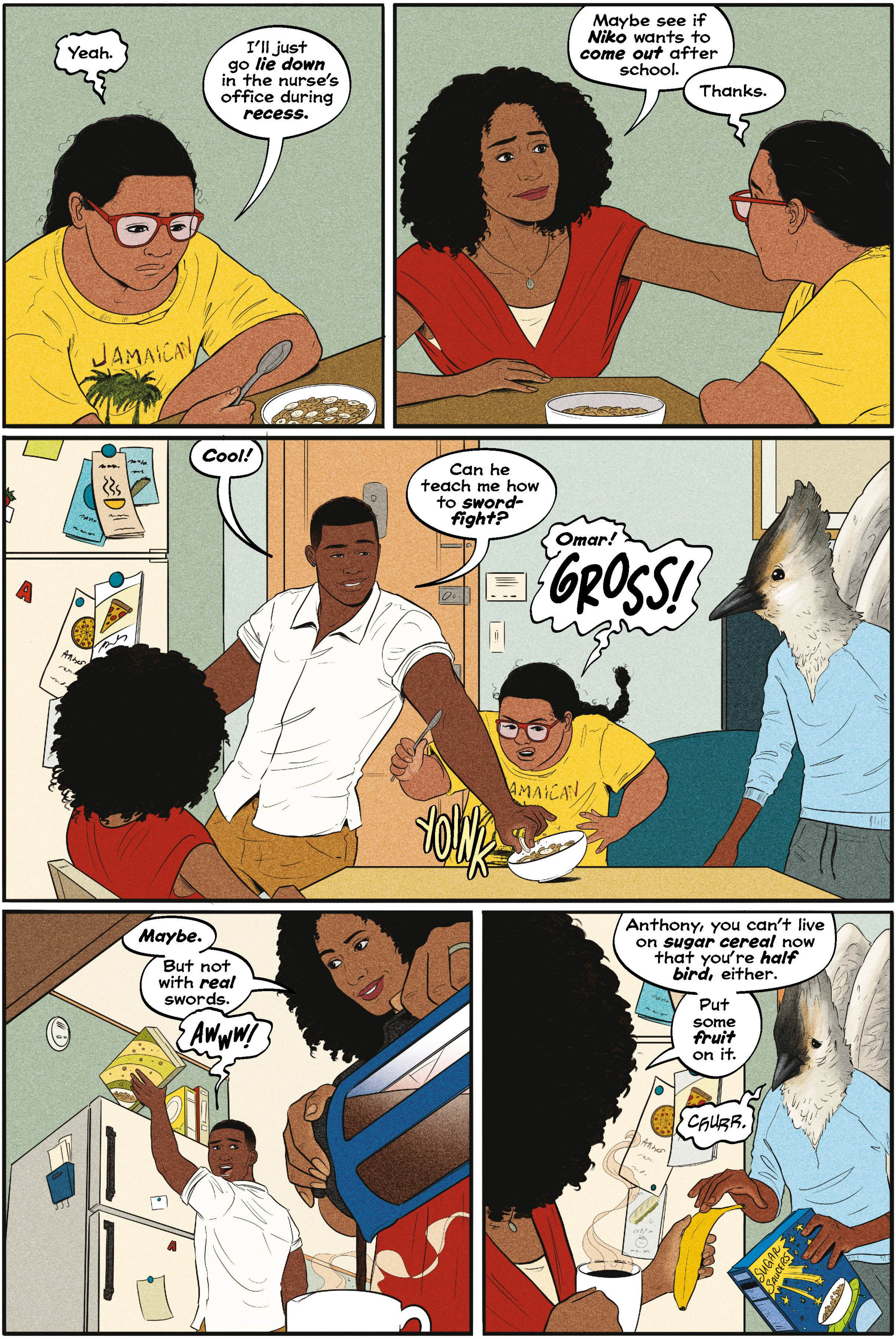

How *long* have you been awake, Pops?
Long enough.
Just felt like letting it all *sink in.*
Yeah.
Thanks.
Mmmm
You *holding up* okay?


I am *really* not.
It's what the boy *wants.*
And I want him to be *safe.*
Which makes *me* the *bad guy.*
No, *leave 'em.* I'll wash up.
Thank you, Pops.
Hide the *knife* good, before one of my *kids* decides to use it on *me.*
You're doing *fine,* Robin.
...Then *why* doesn't it feel like I am?

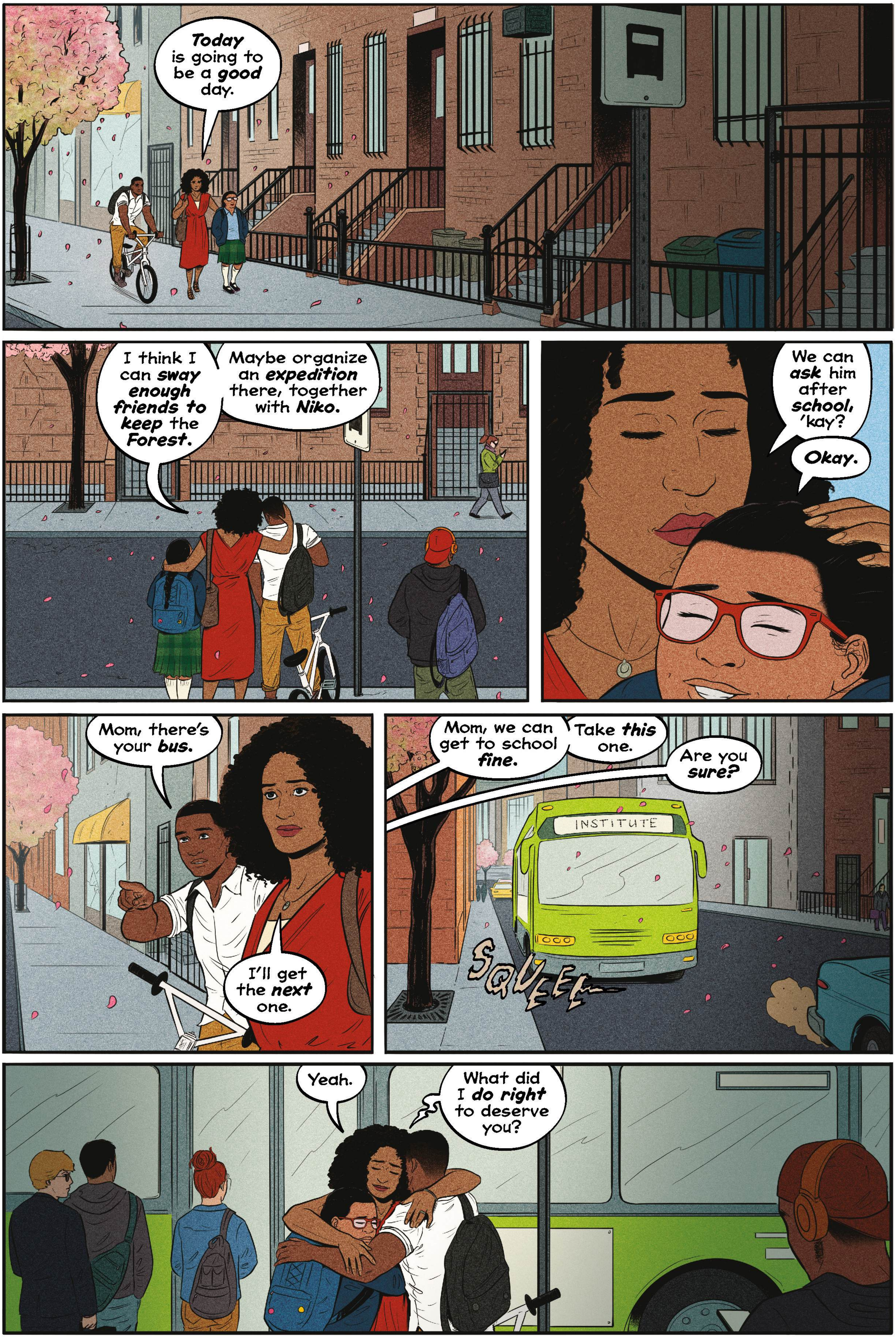
KOOO!
KRRR!
KOOOO!
Mmmrff
JAMAICAN ME CRAZY
Owww.
Hips, whyyy.
Heh.
And just what do you think you're doing, young lady?
Oop!

Hmmm?
My **hips** hurt.
I want to--
Honey.
JAMAICAN ME CRAZY
You **can't** go be **Niko** whenever you don't want to be **yourself.**
Why **not,** though?
Niko's hips don't **hurt.**
He can do BACKFLIPS.
It's just **not** a good **idea.**
THAT'S NOT A REASON!
Fine.
He's an **adult.**
He's a **he.**
And he's **white.**
Do you **want** to be white?
Because so help me, I will **throw** that sword in the **river** and you will **never** see it again.

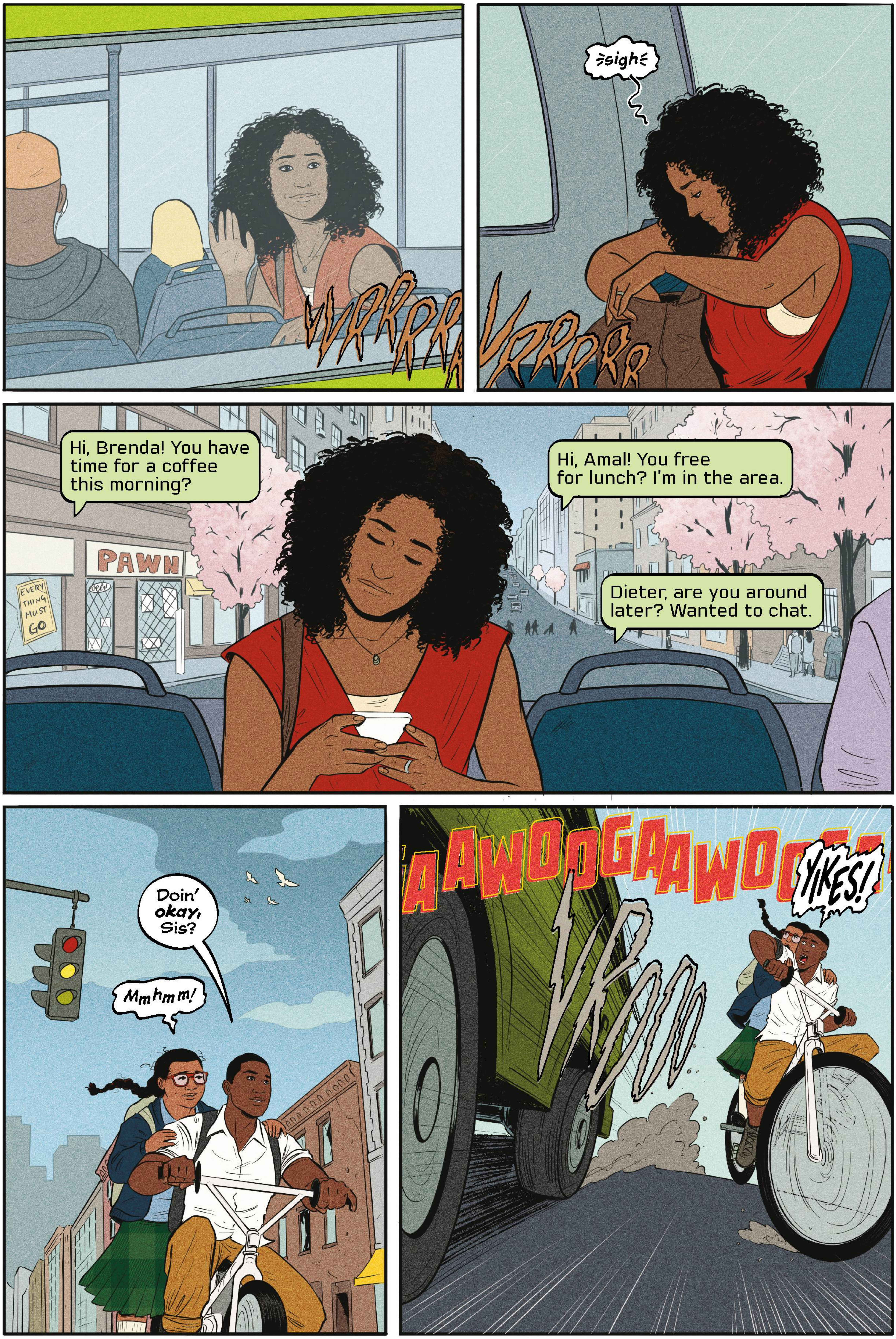

Ew, NO!
I don't want to be white.
I don't want to be a grownup, either.
Trust me. Put that off as long as you can.
But Niko's badass. And people listen to him.
Most people. Not you.
TEA
SUGAR
FLOUR
You can't just run away and be someone else when things get tough, Tré.
JAMAICAN
I know, Mom, duh!
But he's the only vacation I get.
And he doesn't get to live at all without me!
I have to sit down.
Standing's ouchy.
You okay for school today?
JAMAICAN
ME CRAZY


Yeah.
I'll just go lie down in the nurse's office during recess.
JAMAICAN
Maybe see if Niko wants to come out after school.
Thanks.
Cool!
Can he teach me how to sword-fight?
Omar! GROSS!
JAMAICAN
YOINK
Maybe. But not with real swords.
AWWW!
Anthony, you can't live on sugar cereal now that you're half bird, either.
Put some fruit on it.
CHURR.
SUGAR SAUCERS

Okay! We're leaving for ***school*** in ***fifteen.***
Everybody be ***ready.***
CHIRP!
Anthony, ***not*** you!
You're ***staying home*** with Pops.
OW!
YANK
You ***mind?***
I just gotta work some stuff out. Maybe ***homeschool.***
'Course not.
You going to the ***Institute*** today?
Get your coat.
But--
Coat.
I'm going to the ***café*** across the street from the ***Institute.***
See if I can ***talk*** to some of my ***colleagues.***
As long as there's no ***attack...***


Today is going to be a good day.
I think I can sway enough friends to keep the Forest.
Maybe organize an expedition there, together with Niko.
We can ask him after school, 'kay?
Okay.
Mom, there's your bus.
I'll get the next one.
Mom, we can get to school fine.
Take this one.
Are you sure?
INSTITUTE
SQUEEL
Yeah.
What did I do right to deserve you?

Bye, Mom!
Good luck today!
316
317
316


VRRRRRR
sigh
VRRRRRR
Hi, Brenda! You have time for a coffee this morning?
Hi, Amal! You free for lunch? I'm in the area.
Dieter, are you around later? Wanted to chat.
PAWN
EVERY THING MUST GO
OPEN
Doin' okay, Sis?
Mmhmm!
AWOOGA
AWOO
YIKES!
VROOOO

GAAWOO WOOGA AWOOGA AWOOGA
GO BACK!
We're **closing** the area.
You **have** to go back.
C'mon, man!
Her school's like **two blocks** away--
Omar...
I **don't care.** Go around.
...We can ***shortcut*** down the ***alley.***
You kids get ***out*** of here!
NOW!

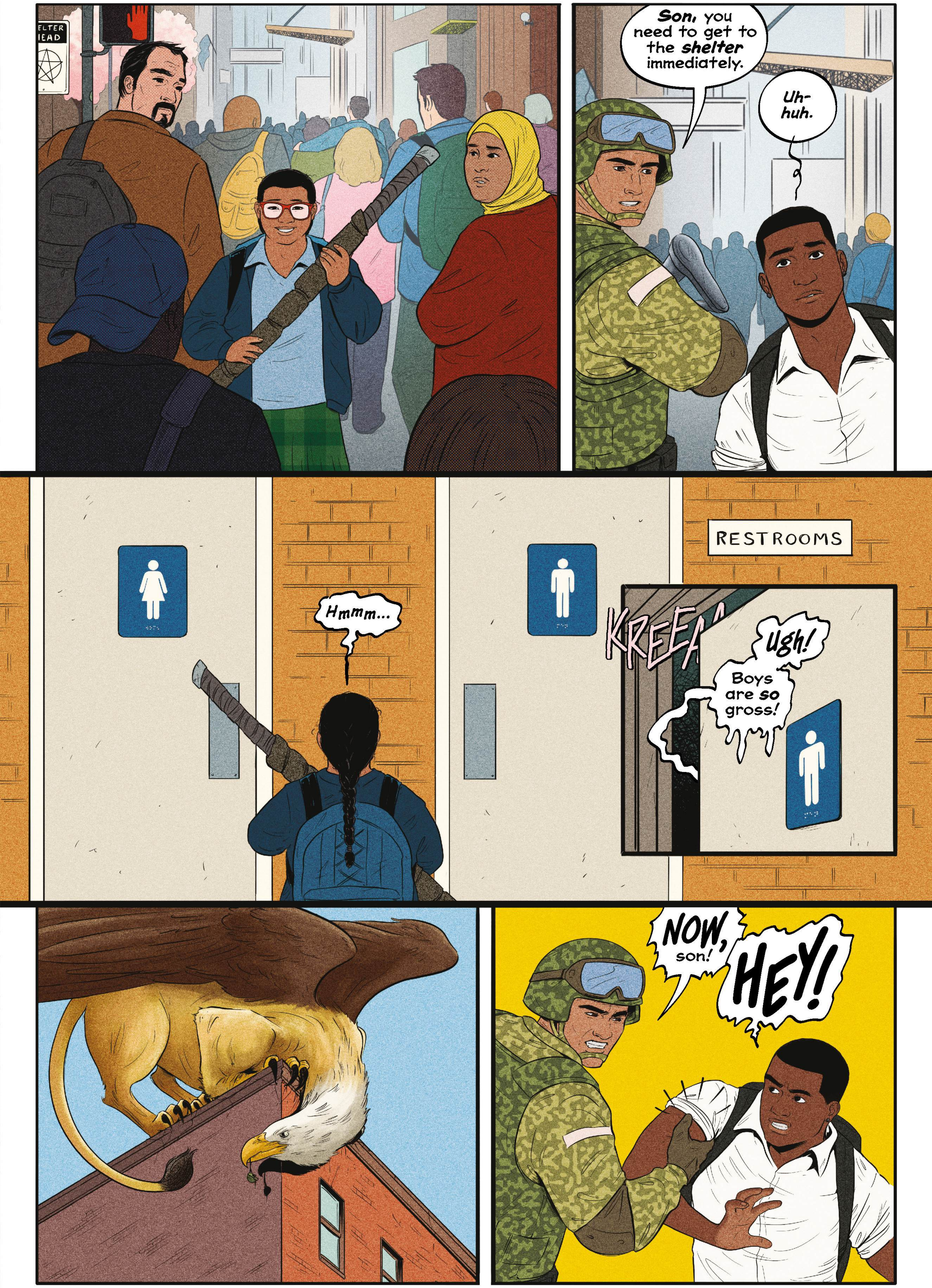
Maybe **somebody** just found an **artifact**, or something.
Yeah.
Hope so.
KRUSSTLL
STOMP, STOMP STOMP
OUT OF THE WAY!
!
THERE IT IS!
Get the **nets**!
Tré, we gotta **go**!

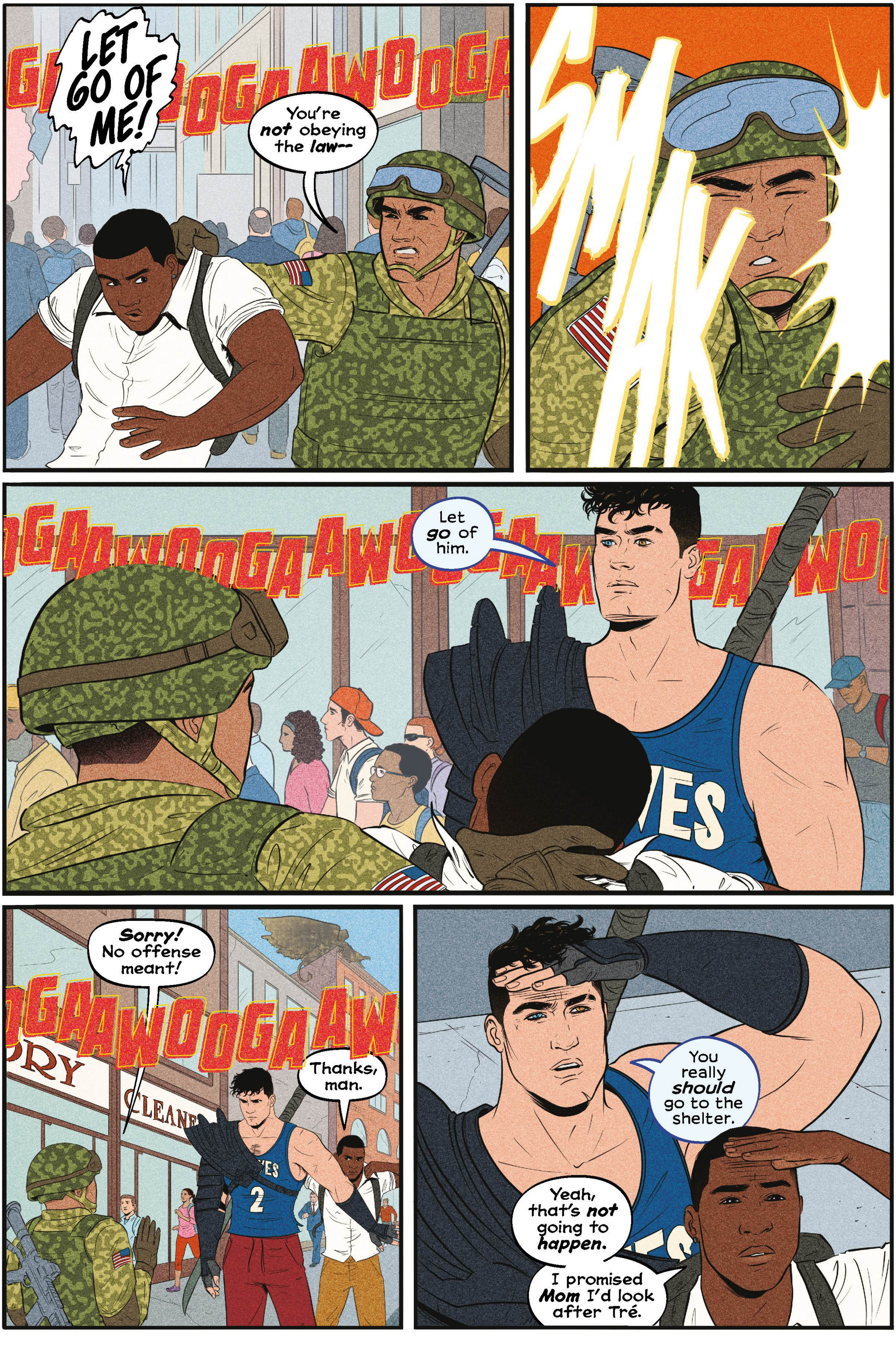
HISSSSS
SMAK
Yeah, it's...
...*not* an artifact.
RROOAARR!
Get me the BIGGEST GUN we have--

RRAAAWK
SNIK
FLAP
FLAP
GRAAAWKk!
S-stay back!

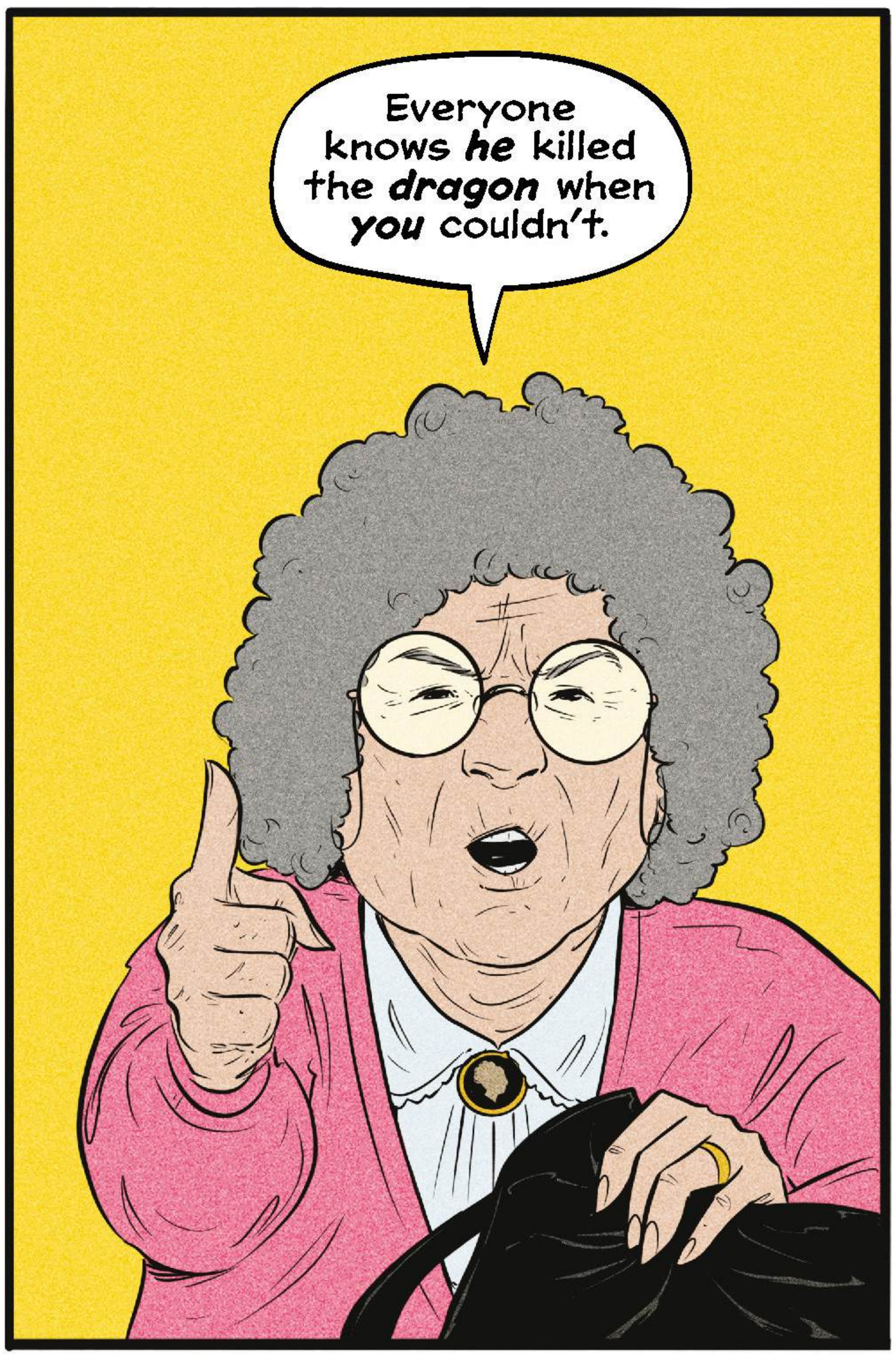
We gotta get further *away*.
Huff
Huff
No.
We have to get *home*.
Get the *sword*.
$1.50
SHELTER AHEAD
What?! No way!
Omar! If there's an *attack* today, then Mom will *fail*.
So you think it's a *good idea* for *you* to go fight the *monster*--
HEY!
You kids need to get to the *shelter!*
Not me.
Niko.
Tré, *maybe* we should just let the *CPS* take care of this.
You know, the *GROWN-UPS?*
Oh, yeah, because they have such a *GREAT* track record.

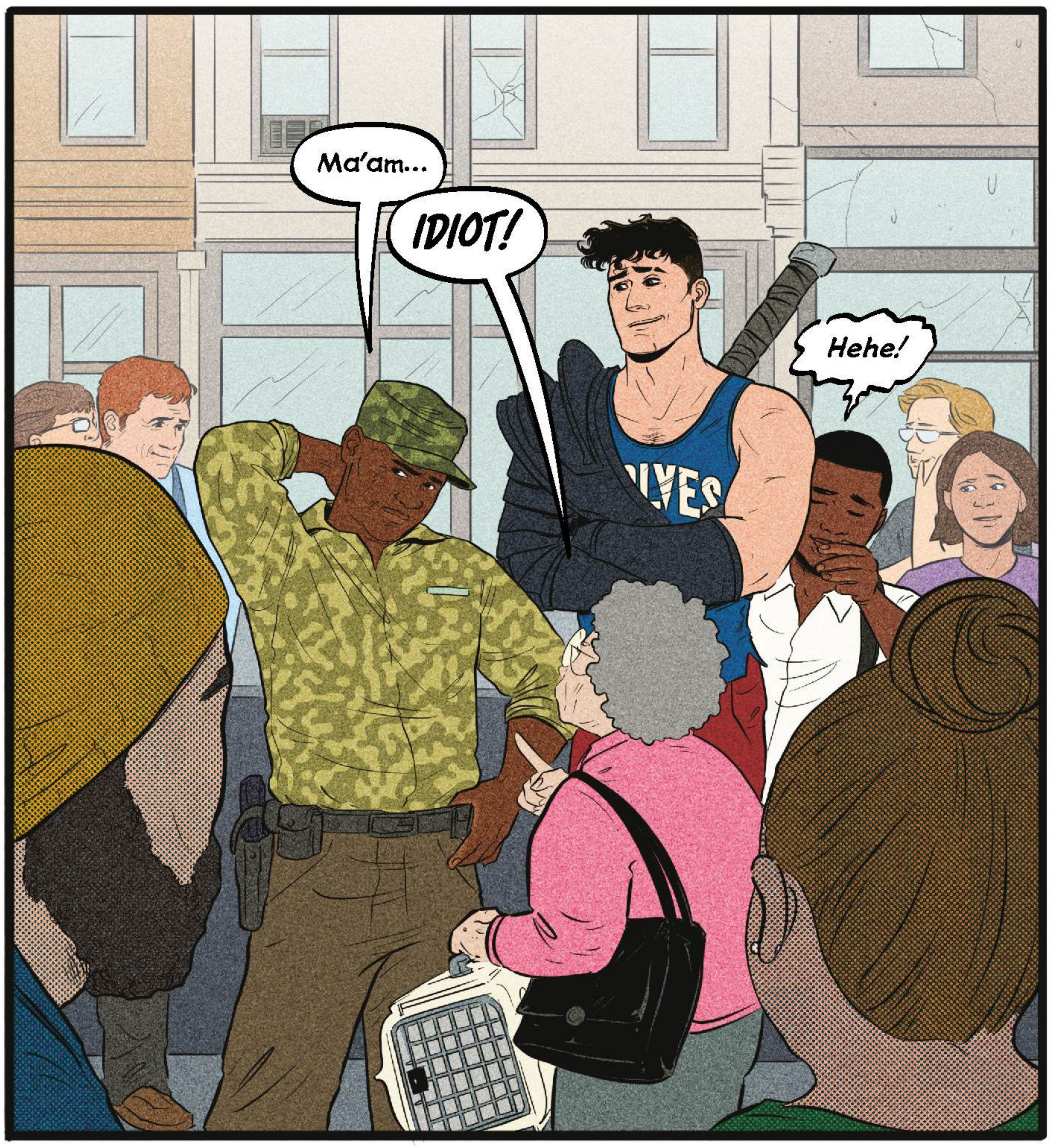
So instead you want to call up your medieval prince buddy who leaves a trail of destruction wherever he goes?
I believe in him!
He knows about magic.
Omar, look!
IT'S ANTHONY!
CHIRRUP!
FLIP
GOT IT!
Oof!

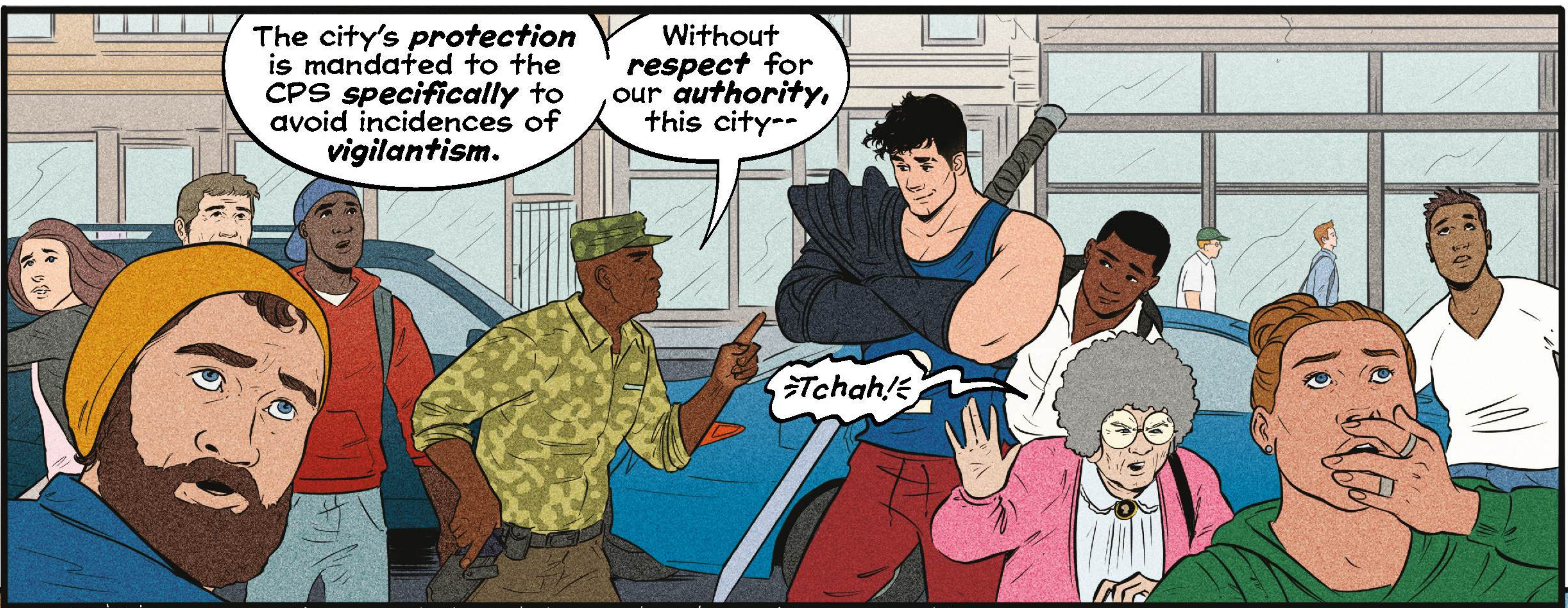

Son, you need to get to the shelter immediately.
Uh-huh.
RESTROOMS
Hmmm...
KREEA
Ugh!
Boys are so gross!
NOW, son!
HEY!

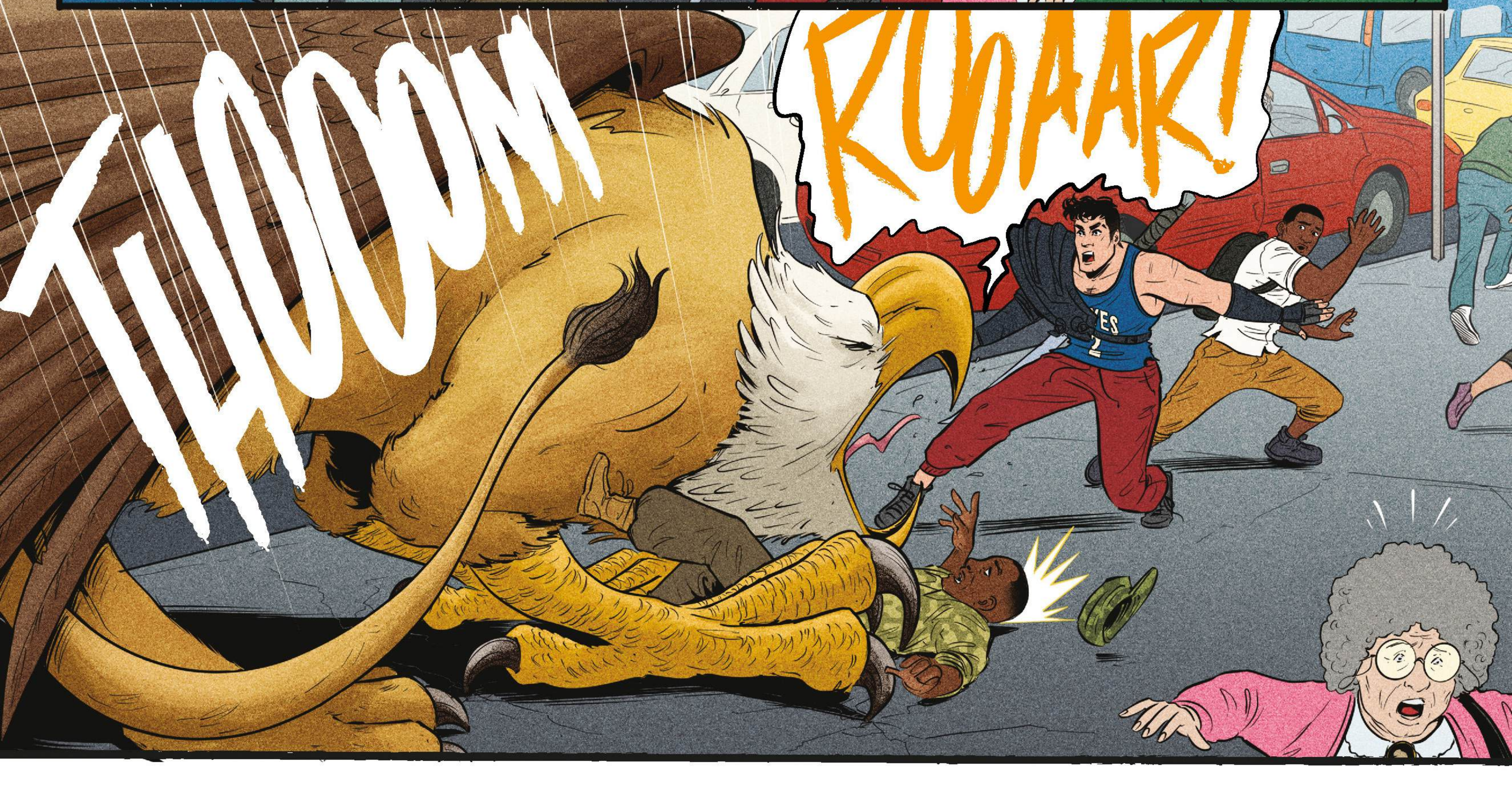

LET GO OF ME!
AWOOGAAWOOGA
You're *not* obeying the *law*--
SMAK
AWOOGAAWOOGAAWOOGA
Let *go* of him.
AWOOGAAWOOGAAW
Sorry! No offense meant!
Thanks, man.
CLEANE
You really *should* go to the shelter.
Yeah, that's *not* going to *happen*.
I promised *Mom* I'd look after Tré.

We *can't talk* about the *nature* of the threat, ma'am.
But *how long* do you think we'll--
YOU AGAIN!
May I?
Absolutely *not*. This is a matter for the *CPS*.
I have to ask you to *leave* the *secured area*--
THWAK
MORON!


Everyone knows **he** killed the **dragon** when **you** couldn't.


Ma'am...
IDIOT!
Hehe!


The city's **protection** is mandated to the CPS **specifically** to avoid incidences of **vigilantism.**
Without **respect** for our **authority,** this city--
Tchah!


THOOOM
ROOAAR!

H--
Help--
WAMM
ROOARR!
YAAA

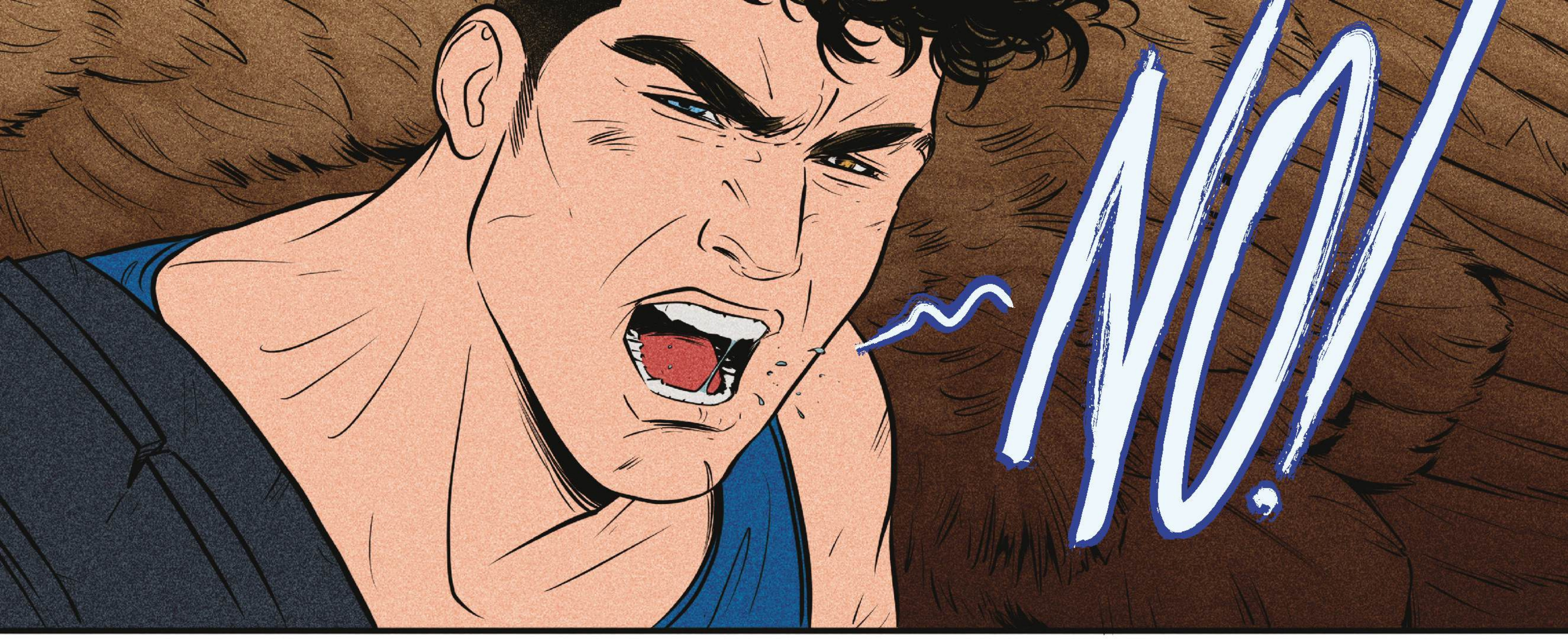
THUMP
Hnh!
Hng!
GRRMMBBL
...
GRRGGLL
...You're hungry.
GRRMMBBL
CRR.

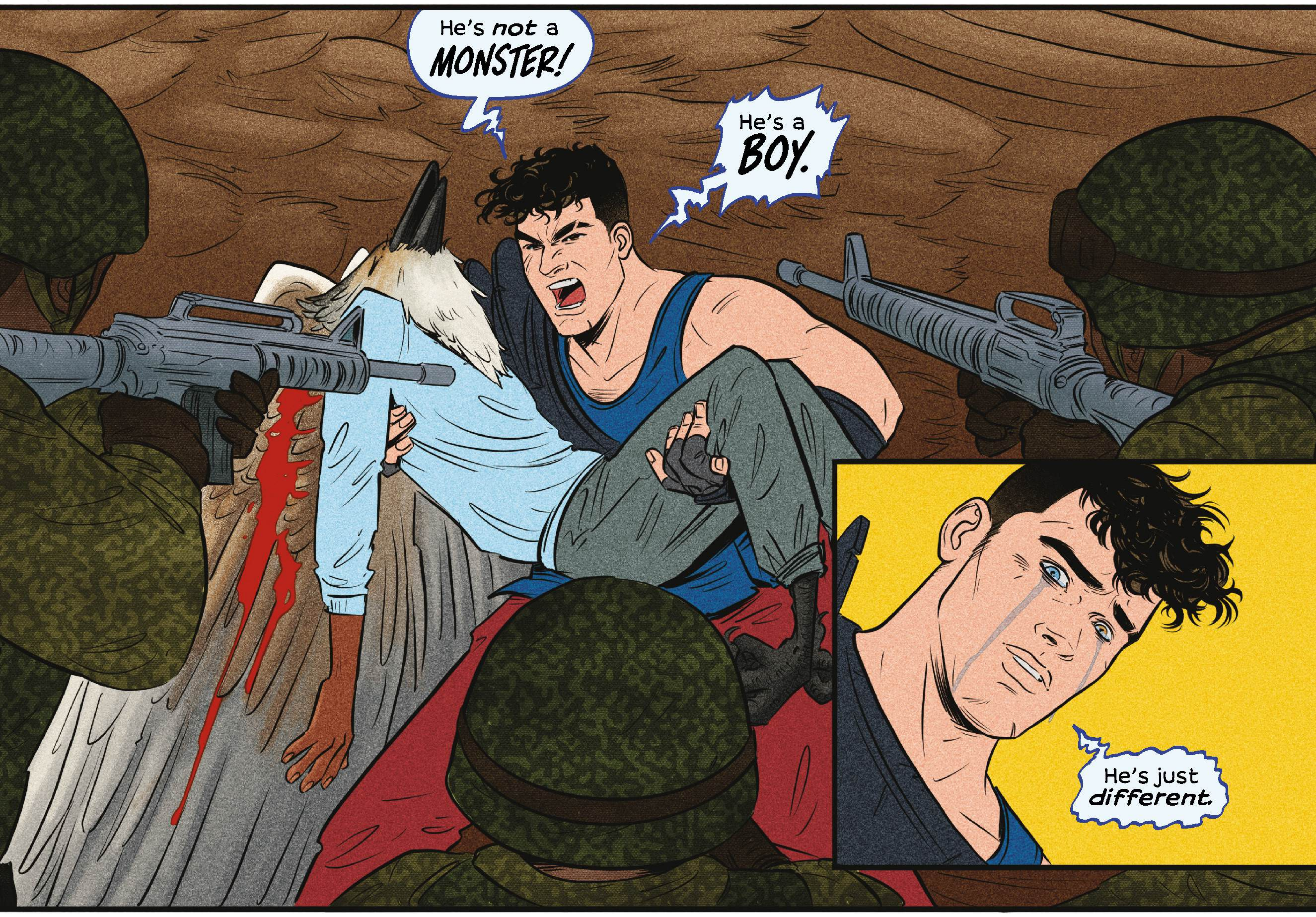
Where is your *live-stock?*
Your nearest *pasture?*
I need *two cows.*
Maybe *three.*
Step *away* from the *monster.*
OMAR!
Where do you get your *meat* from?
SAM'S GROCER
Uhhh...
Hnnh--

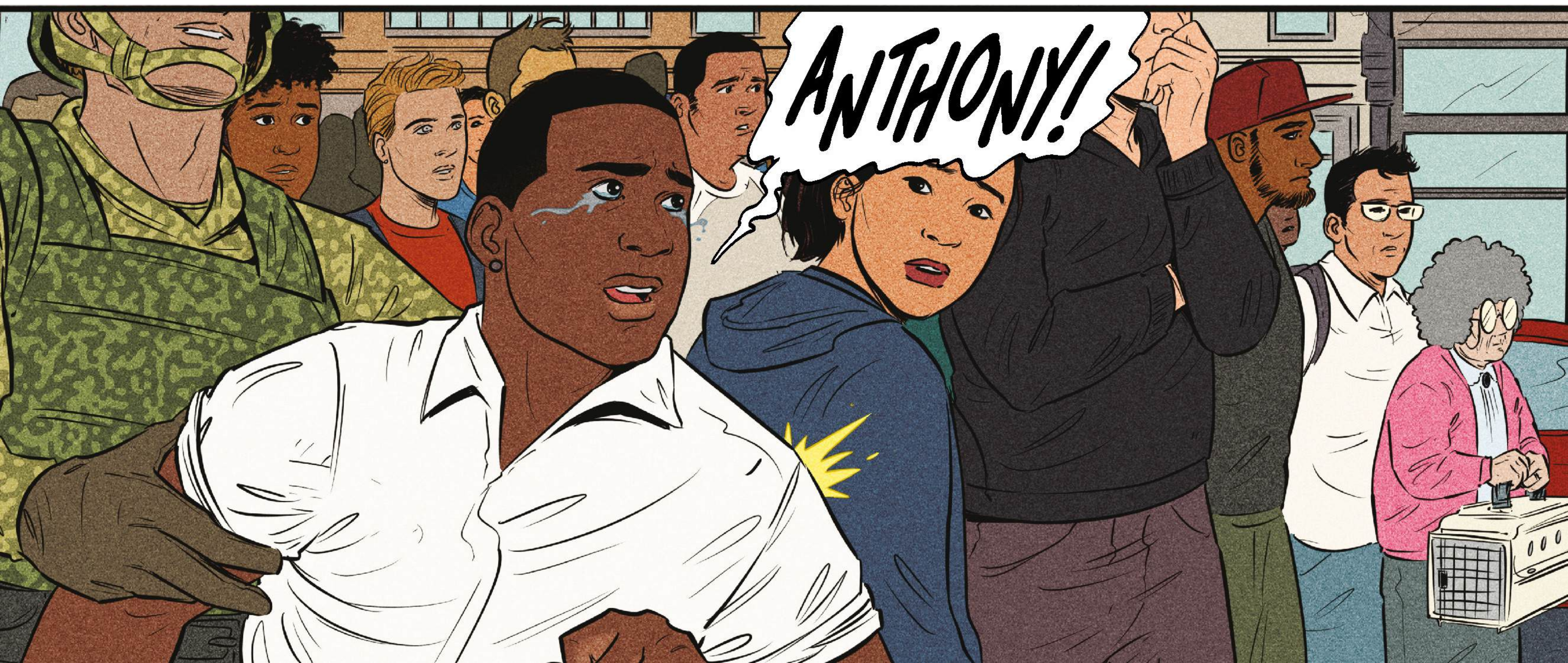
Lower your *weapons.*
Your...
...guns?
NO! That monster *attacked* the city--
He's just *hungry.*
Feed him, and he'll *go away.*
If we *feed* him, he'll just come *back.*
BANG
--?!

I *got* 'im!
I got the *little* one!

ANTHONY!
Step *away* from the ***monsters!***
This is your ***last*** warning!


NO!

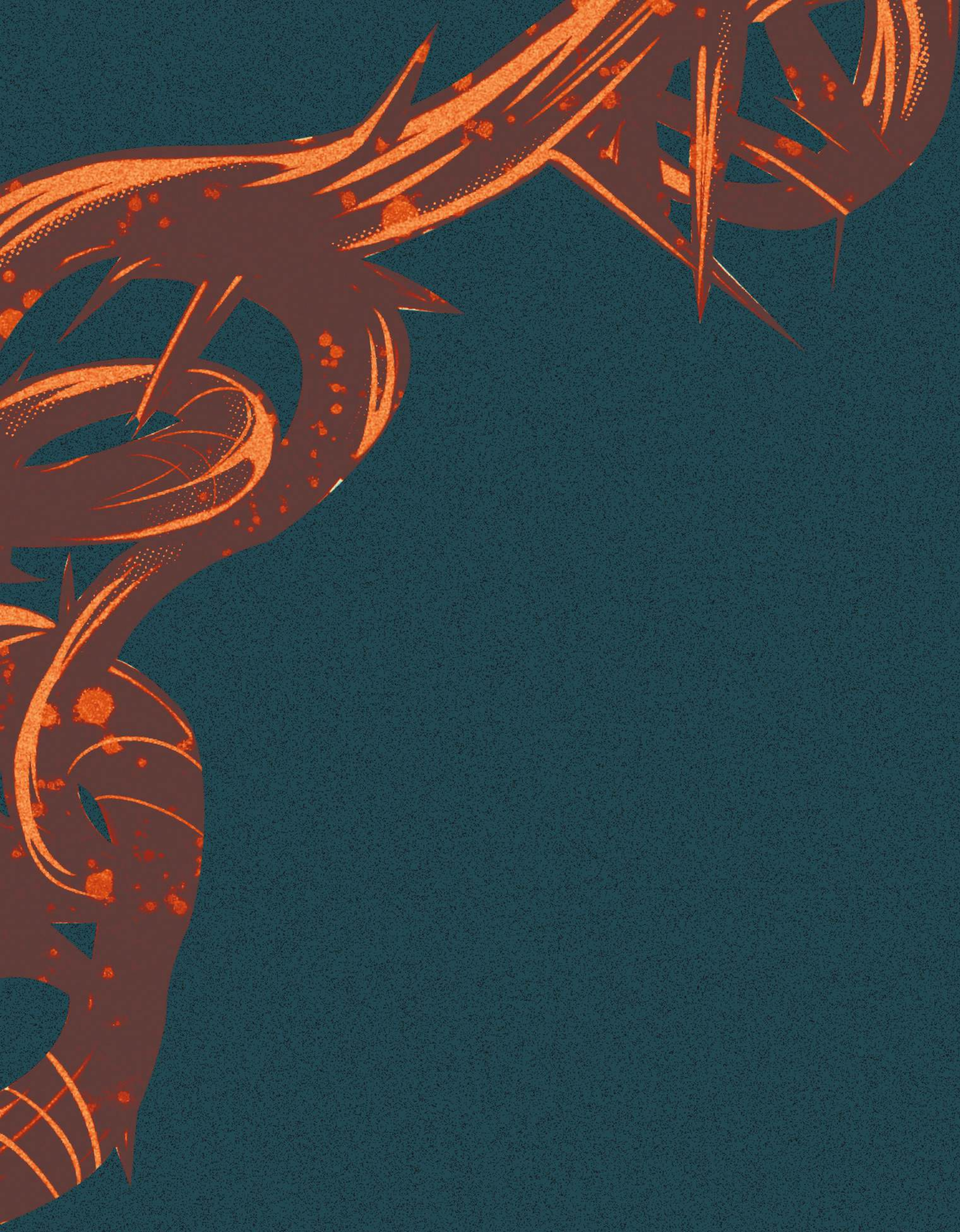

He's *not* a **MONSTER!**
He's a **BOY.**
He's just *different.*


ANTHONY!

We gotta get him home.
Niko?
...
C'mon.
Pops was an army medic.
He'll know what to do.
C'mon, Niko. This way.
Hey!
Aren't you going to do anything about the big monster?!
I'm sorry. I--
--I have to go.
It's moving!
HISSSS!

PUT IT DOWN!
BRAKKA
BRAKKA
BRAKKA
BRAKKA
CGRR...
Finish it.
BRAKKA
BRAK
BRA

4



WOLVES
2
Niko.
I'm going to need you to hold his *wing* steady while I try to dig the ***bullet*** out.

He...
...he says there's ***something else*** we should try ***first.***
Anthony?
Anthony, it's ***Tré,*** can you ***hear*** me?
CHuuu
Niko wants you to try ***turning back*** to your old self.
He says--
My father was a ***shapechanger.*** I've ***watched*** him do it.
Can you try to--
--like, ***rearrange*** yourself?
WOLVES
WOLVES
WOLVES
2

No. Shift toward a shape you ***know.***
Make the ***damaged wing*** into an ***undamaged arm.***
Picture it ***clearly.***
Let the ***bullet*** fall away.
You can go back to being yourself ***afterward,*** he promises.
He ***means*** being a ***bird,*** if that's what you ***want*** to be.
Be ***strong,*** little bro.
CHURR...

PLINK
ULP!
HRRLLKK!
Niko says his dad would be **exhausted** afterward.
CRRRR...
We should get him into **bed.**
WOLVES 2
He's so **light!**
Wow.
WOLVES 2

RAPTORS
There.
Sleep well, son.
You okay?
Mmhmm.
You throw up?
Mmhmm.
Sorry. Runs in the family.
I thought it would get better, the more time I spent as a medic.
But, nope.
Whoo--
Any moment, all this is going to hit me and I'll be dashing for the can myself.

Who *are* you right now?
Niko.
Tré's...
Today was not easy for her.
She's *furious* with me for letting the *gryphon* die.
But she doesn't want to *change back* yet.
Her *own* body...
...hurts?
She is in *pain.* All the *time.*
Tré has a *medical* condition.
There's *not* really *anything* the doctors can *do* for it.

Won't get worse, so they say.
But won't get better, either.
She doesn't deserve that.
No.
She doesn't.
FAST DELIVERY
INE-IN or DELIVERY!
ONY'S
DELIVERY AVAILABLE!
CAPULCO
TAQUERIA
5555
You should shower, son.
Change your clothes.
You'll feel better.
This is all I have.
WOLVES
2
OMAR!
Bring some clothes that will fit Niko.
The stuff in the laundry hamper's clean.
Shower's in there.
Plenty of hot water.

FSSH HH
Nnh!
Ah!
Gahh--
Ouch.

How is he?
Good.
Still sleeping.
ZZZ HIC ZZ ZZZ
GRMMBBLL
sigh
Hmmm.
FRIDGE

A
XTRA LARGE EGGS
TAK
GOING OUT
BACK SOON
-R
KLIK
COLD DRINKS
NO SOLICITING
WILL WORK

DING
Amal!
Thank you so much for coming--
Dr. Grant!
I didn't realize you were still here!
I'm so sorry, I've just been paged, must run back to the lab--
DING

...
KLAP
KLAP
KLAP
KLAP
KLAP
KLAP
Gasp
YEAAH!
ACTION NOW
MAGIC KILLS
WOOOO!

No...
They're *bombing?*
Like, *finally.*
You hear two people got *killed* in front of the FoodMart today?
They were *eaten.*
That *Forest* should have been *burned* to the *ground months* ago.
ING
Hey! You forgot your *coffee!*
If the government signs this off as a *state of emergency,* then the *planes* can be ready as *early* as tomorrow.
Next question.

You there. In the blue hat.
Do you think the *monsters* have human *help?*
There was *someone* at the *attack* today, with a *sword*...
...He was *protecting* a monster.
Yes. We *know* of this *person*.
He is *magical*, and should be regarded as *extremely dangerous*.
Niko! Oh, god--
The *CPS* are on the *lookout* for him.
Once in *custody*, he will be kept *under observation* here at the Institute in a *secure cleanroom*, where he can do no more *harm*.

OPEN
Ready to go?
Almost.
Okay!
HAUL 'ER!
OPEN
KLANK
KLANK
KLANK
Go on home, folks. The show's over.
YOU!

It's YOUR FAULT that Eric died!
He's in a body bag because of YOU.
You left the monster alive and he killed Eric!
No, I had to--
MONSTER LOVER!
THWUMP

Where did you come from, anyway?
The same place as them?
Go back.
We don't want your kind here.
YEAH!
You should arrest him!
No--
Check his papers! He's clearly--
--?!

Tré...
...I'm returning to your *home* then changing us *back.*
Don't ask me to *come out* again.
Niko...
...You should still do *the thing.*
It was a *good* plan.
I don't think I *can.*
Tell me what to *get?*
I'll drive.
Okay.

SuperMART
PHARMACY

Thanks.
LAUNDRY
TAXI
Siiigh
Okay.
I'm home!
Want to order Japanese tonight?
I'd kill for some ramen--
SNIFF SNIFF
--what the--

Okay, who *are* you and *what* have you done with my family?
I wanted to have *one* thing this week that *didn't* end in *disaster.*
So.
Cooking.
BONK
Plus, you've *all* been very *nice* to me.
I made the *bread!*

You can't even make *toast*, Omar.
Niko *showed* me!
Bread is *easy*.
Making *bread* is how he got the *fairy princess* to fall in *love* with him.
Nah.
He probably just did the *dishes* afterward.
She was so surprised by the *clean sink*, her heart skipped a *beat*.
She thought it was *true love*, but it was only shock-related *arrhythmia*.
Please. It was a *palace*.
She had *people* for that.

Which, at the time, *included me* because I was *hiding* among the kitchen staff.
So *yes,* technically, *I did* the dishes.
Tch
There's your game.
Right there.
Ohmigod, Mom, I gotta tell you this *thing* we did at the market.
We ran into these two *bitches* from my school--
That is *not* a word we *use* in this house, Tré.
Niko, do the *thing!*
?!
Show them, come *OOON!*
Do it! Do the *"I'm a prince"* thing!
In the absence of *popcorn...*

I am *only* doing this so Tré stops *shouting* in my head.
...
FLOUR
You got *any* idea what we're supposed to be seeing here?
Not a *clue.*
I *can't.*
Sorry.
I--
No.
BAHAHA!
Man, you are such a *dork,* it's unreal.
Sit down. Let's *eat.*

Tsk
A little *overdone.*
Keep your pea-pickin' patties off the food, kid.
You did *fine.*
WHAP
Wanna *compare* today's *disasters?*
You guys can go first.
!
...
Yeah, *uhhh...*
...no.
These look good. Potato?
Uh, actually...
...there was an *attack,* and, well, *uh...*
SUGA
FLOUR

...we got *involved.*
CHK--
--CHUU--
And Anthony...
WHAT?!
Ohmy **god**ohmy ohmy**god**oh my**god**--
Baby. I was ***afraid*** of this.
Let me **see.**
CHURR.
That's not...
...it ***looks*** like it happened ***days*** ago.
Fill ***mine*** up too while you're at it, kid.

Yeah, well. **Niko** coached him through **healing** the wound by **shapeshifting** around it.
So you **could** change back.
CAK.
CAP.
CARR...
If you **want** to be like this, **why** can't you just be like this with us and be **normal** outside?
Those **people** are **ignorant** assholes.
They tried to **kill** you because they **thought** you were from the **Forest.**
They **will** try it again.
You **have** to change back, ba--
BAM

About the Forest...
Siiigh
They're going to bomb it.
Today was a complete waste of time. Nobody would talk to me.
Even my friends treated me like I was radioactive.
Oh, yeah.
They plan to arrest you and lock you in a glass box in the Institute, for "studying."
So, all in all, great day.
Mmmmm--WOW!

Niko, what's ***in*** this?
Oh my ***god.***
Family secret.
Okay, I'd ***actually*** do the ***dishes*** for ***this*** bread.
I still ***don't*** believe that you're not ***magical.***
Alas, ***no.***
tink
tnk
slice
MUNCH
MUNCH
MUNCH
So how did you ***curse*** the ***Forest*** if you're ***not*** magical?

Via the *hairbrush,* probably.
How do the *monsters* come *out,* then?
If your intent was, whoever goes *in* can't *come out* again.
And *why* do they go *back?*
I don't *know.*
But I think I can *lift* the *curse* if I go there.
But if you're *wrong,* you *can't leave* either, can you?
Tré can't.
Sigh
It's not a very *good* plan.
I know *that.*
Who was *pursuing* you, that you *imprisoned* in the forest?
A *giantess.*
She didn't like me very much.

I killed her *son.*
-Sigh- I wish *Ileana* were here.
Do you think there's a *chance* my dad is still alive?
All things are *possible,* but...
...it's not *likely.*
The monsters are coming to the *city* because they're *hungry.*
They've *eaten* everything in the *Forest,* and the *city* is the *closest* supply of *meat.*
But what if when people go *in,* they're stuck in stasis like you--
I'm sorry.
When do they *bomb?*
Soon.
-Siiigh- What if...
...what if we just let it happen?

CARP.
What will *happen* in the city, when people can no longer *blame* their *problems* on the *Forest?*
What will happen when *children* start being born *different?*
...Oh *god.*
The *problem* with running out of monsters is...
...people *always* manage to find *more.*

I'm *leaving* before dawn.
Then give me my ***daughter*** back.
For one last night.
Of course.
Besides, do you think I cooked all this for ***you?***
Tré needs her ***strength.***
WAIT.
You've got--
FOOF

Can't have you facing an *angry giantess* with *flour* on your face.
Thanks.
SHUNK
THUD
Are you sure, Tré?
Yeah.
It's what **Dad** would have done.
That it *is.*
Come on. Let's *eat.*
I *approve* of you choosing a magic warrior friend who is also a great *cook,* Tré
Hee hee!

Stop giving me that *look,* Pops.
I'm ***stealing*** your last piece of ***bread*** for that, old man.
Gasp!
You wouldn't ***dare!***

DING a LING
DING a LING
DING a LING
ALARM
5:00 AM
OFF
DING a LING
DING a LING
DING a LING
DING a LING
DING a LING
DING a
SMAK
ALARM
5:00 AM
Uuurgh--
Mmmf!
Okay. Here we go.
KLIK

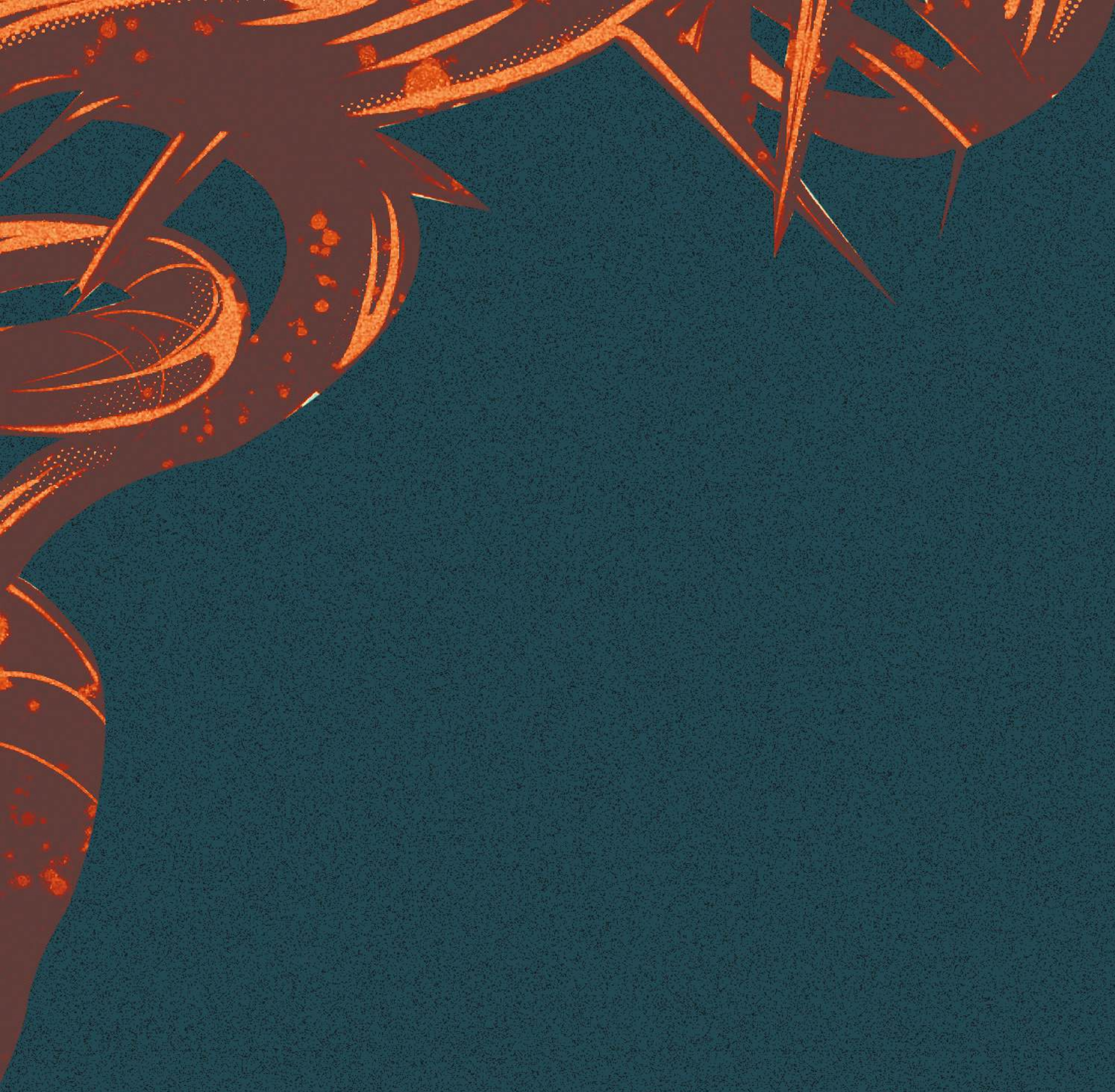
Here we go.
Yeah.
Tré...
...in my day, before we went into *battle,* we'd ask the people we *care* about to *give* us something we could take with us.
To remind us who we fought for.
Who we were *coming back* to.
I know I'm taking *you* with me, but...
...is there something of *yours* I can carry?
For *luck?*

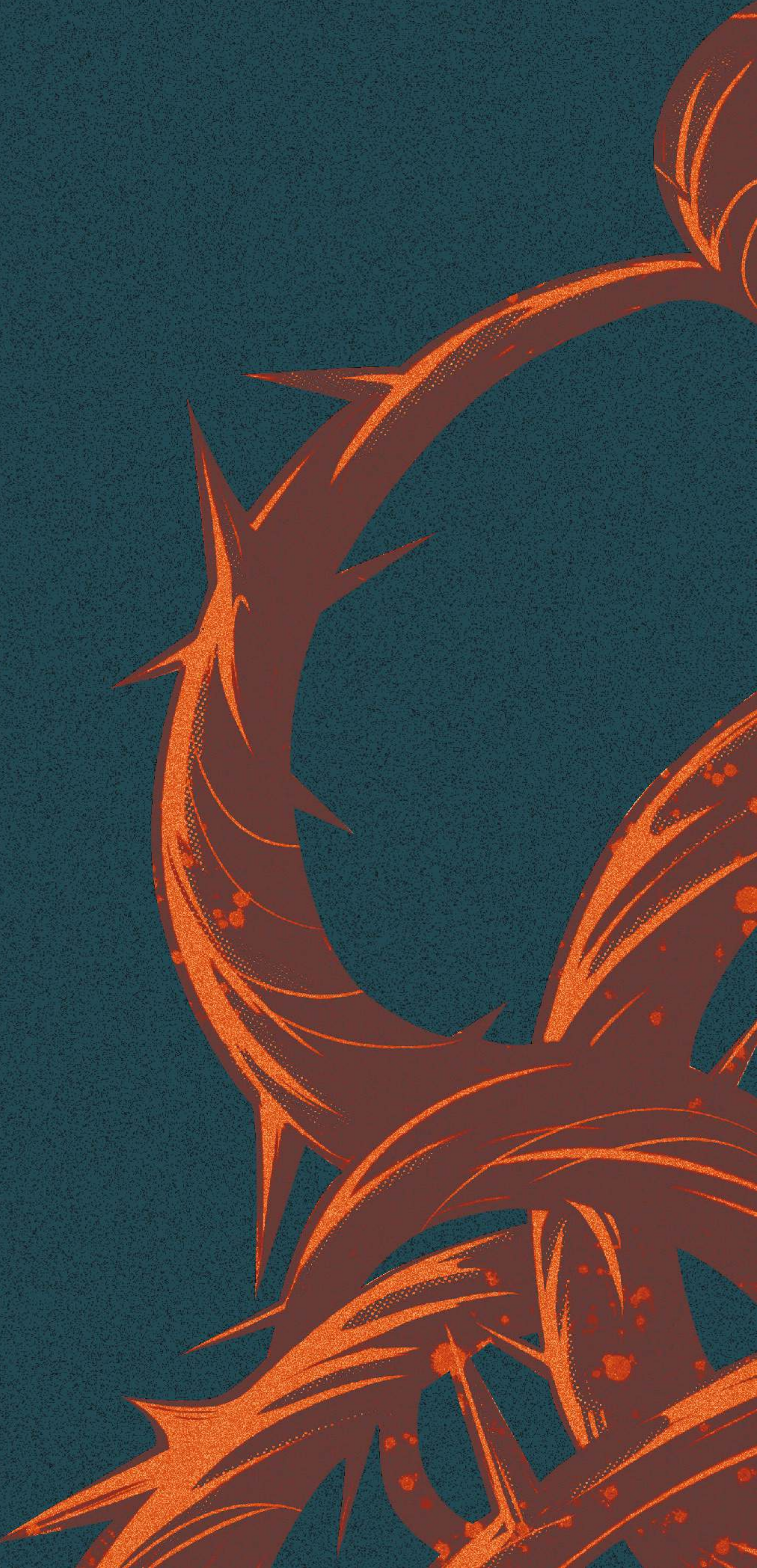
You're so *weird.*
Uhhh...
Mom got me *this* when she went to a *convention* in *Japan.* It's my *favorite* hair thing.
You can just put it in your *pocket* or something.
Hmmm.
No.
A favor has to be *worn.*
You're *ridiculous.*
It's a ridiculous *world.*

WHUH?!
Morning.
Thanks.
Um...?
We don't let *family* go and face *danger* alone.
Yeah.
I'm sorry.
If there was *any* way I could *leave* Tré here, believe me, I would--
No, Niko.

You, too.
You're one of us now.
Yes. YOU.
After the third time you save our lives, we get to keep you.
It's a rule.
It is?
CHIRRUP!
Yep.
C'mon.
Emilio's letting us borrow his truck.

5





~~BLACK ROCK~~
NATIONAL PARK
2 mi
GO BACK
CLOSED
VVVMM MMMM

How do you *feel?*
I don't *know.*
Light, I guess.
Like nothing *matters* any more.
P R N D 2 1
KLUNK
SKKT
TIK
Maybe *nothing* ever did.
WELC
TO
BLACK R

tik
You should *stay--*
SKRNNCH
--here.

Uhhh...
Thanks but no thanks. We're coming with.
Yeah. Mom's smart, Anthony can fly...
...and I'm the only one who knows how to use a cellphone.
You NEED us.
Is there actually cell coverage here?
Weirdly, yeah.
Great. We can live-stream the apocalypse.
I'll stay and guard the truck.

Are you sure, Pops?
They **tried** me in the **jungle.**
And they **tried** me in the **desert.**
They're **welcome** to try me in the **Forest.**
Besides, I'm **old** and gristly and won't **taste** nice.
Snooort
Okay. Stay near me.

My *name* is *Niko Vulpe* of *Oltenia.* I wish to see *Vesela.* She...
...She *knows* me.

tk
tk
RSSTT
FWIIP
RRSSSTTLL
--!
This is so extremely cursed.

Yep. Cursed.
Don't let the Forest take anything of *yours.*
Don't *eat* or drink anything you are given here.
Not if you *ever* want to *leave.*
KRIIIK

Nicoletaaaa...
...
...No.

Thisss wayyy.
Mother hasss been *expecting* youuu.
Ulp!
Oof!
Careful!
RRSSTTL
KRK
CHUR!
?!
SKKT
KKTT

SKKT
TIK
KLIK

FWIP
SNATCH
Ow.
CHAK
Here. Put your hair in your pocket, and leave the branch.
Thanks.
SNATCH
CHK!

So, uhhh...
Yesss?
...Can *all* of you talk?
Sssome can *talk.* Sssome can *fly.*
Sssome *crawl.* Sssome *die.*
SSKK
RATTLE
All *ssstarve.* Never enough to *eat.*
Nothing for Foressst *children* but city *meat.*

Ohhh.
The monsters can leave because they were born here.
They never came in.
They're her children.
What?
HRRRK!
SNAP
We're here.

KREAAA
tak
tik
Princess Nicoleta!
So *good* to see you again.
...Princess?
Oho!
You haven't *told* your new friends, *have* you?
...?

Go *ahead.* Tell them what you *really* are.
I have *all day.*
In fact, I've got all *eternity.*
Uh...
Niko?
What's she *talking* about?

I might have left out some information that I didn't consider...
...pertinent.
Are you a chick?
There is no way you're a chick.
No. But...
...there was a law. Every king had to send a son to serve the emperor, or they'd lose all their lands and titles.
Yeah, okay, and...?
Somewhat of a problem, in a family with nothing but daughters.

Luckily, the *youngest* one liked to wear *trousers* and climb *trees.*
My older sisters were *happy* to wait for *Prince Charming.*
Me? I wanted to *become* him.
She was *so* cute!
HAHAHA!
Shut *up.*
KRNCH

...
Honestly, I didn't know whether to *eat* her for *lunch* or keep her as a *pet.*
Shut.
Up.
Tré, did you know this?
!!!
Let me talk to Tré, Niko.

Please.
Hhnn!
Heh.
Mom?
Tré...?
No! Mom! I had no idea!
I can't read his mind.
His?
His.
He didn't tell me.

How would *telling* have *helped?*
It matters!
HOW?!
Uhhh...
Why does it matter?
Um...
...because...

It's irrelevant how I was born now, anyway.
What do you mean?
First curse.
After I rescued Ileana from a ***forced marriage*** to the giantess's ***son***--
My ***only*** son that looked human!
I ***finally*** have a child who can ***pass,*** and this freak--
Keep talking.
Please.
FWIIISH

HISSSS!
TK
XK
TK TK
I'll *say* what I like in my home.
SNRRT!
Hey.
Everyone just ***chill.***

As I was *saying.*
After I *imprisoned* Vesela here--
And *killed* my only human *son!*
--and brought *Ileana* back to the emperor, he fell in *love* with her.
It's easy to fall in love with Ileana.
But the emperor was *too late,* because--

--Ileana had *already* fallen in love.
With *me.*
"The emperor wanted to marry her right away.
"But Ileana demanded that he bring her some ***holy water*** from a remote sanctuary. It would make him look ***young*** and ***handsome*** for his wedding day.
"(He was neither.)
"The emperor sent ***me*** to fetch it, of course. I did all his ***dirty work.***
"Ileana warned me not to wake the ***nun*** who ***guarded*** the font. Because she would ***definitely*** curse me.
"And she only knew ***one*** curse--
"--'*Whomsoever is a man shall become a woman, and whomsoever is a woman shall become a man.*'"

That nun was deaf as a *post.* I had to drop an armful of *snow* on her before she *woke up.*
Wow.
Wait, so what happened to the emperor?
Oh.
Ileana *boiled him alive* in his bath.
Should've boiled *you.*
Now, for the *last* time--
--my *name* is Niko. You will *remember* that.

Or what?
My *children* and I outnumber you.
You were always *nothing* without your *magic horse,* and without *Ileana.*
Now you're even *less.* A *shadow* in a sword, here at the *whim* of a child.
What are you going to *do,* Niko...leta?
Why have you *come?*
We've come because they're going to *destroy* the Forest.

Soon. Maybe *today*.
Then my children will *raze* the city.
We came here hoping to find a solution other than *"everybody dies."*
And *who* are *you?*
I'm Dr. Robin Grant. I'm...
...I *used* to be with the *Institute*. I study *magic*.
And I don't think we should *destroy* what we don't *understand*.
Doctor, I am a *thousand* years old and I can tell you people *always* try to destroy that which is *different*.

I was a princess *too,* you know.
My parents wished for a strong girl who would bear them *many heirs.*
And the fates gave them *exactly* what they asked for.

"Imagine their *horror* to have a *giantess* for a daughter, eternally pregnant with monsters.
"They locked me up in their tallest *tower* and threw my *babies* down the well at birth.
"They said I was cursed, but I was what they *wished* for.
"I was their *daughter.*"

When they *died,* I was driven from *my own lands* by people with *torches* and *arrows.*
One day, I bore a *child* who looked *human.*
Yes, my son was a little too *tall,* and maybe not so fine of feature as *you* lot.
I found him a *beautiful* wife, who loved our money, and we had a chance to live *happily* ever *after.*
Until Niko *destroyed* it all.
So tell me *why* I should *care.*

Because *you* killed my *husband*, Captain Christopher Grant.
He was one of the *first* humans to go into the *Forest*.
And I am *still here*, trying to *work* with you.
Because if we're *not* working to be a little better every day...
...then *why* are we living at all?
Nice, lady, but--
Because I *forgive* you.

WHAT?!
I came to lift the curse. I'm *sorry.* I never meant for you to live here forever.
I just *wanted* you to stop *chasing* us.
You may *leave.*
I *remove* the *curse* from this Forest.
You...
...you would do that?

After I--
Yeah.
All the *different* people-- we have *to stick together.*

HAHAHA
Haha--
Hee--
Hee!
Haa!

Hey.
You were **right.**
Hm?
It **doesn't** matter.

AAAAAHHHH
AAAHH!
NO!
KREEAAK
KRIK
KRNNK
You filthy LIARS!

GNAAA!
Get in the *house.* Block the door.
But what about--
LIAR!
Foul trickster!
KRAK
Niko!
Mom! Come on!

You did this just to *laugh* at me, *didn't* you?!
N-NO!
WHAM
KRAK
The *curse* was never even *yours,* was it?
CHANK

It was Ileana's hairbrush. It was her curse.
But I threw it--
I should have known everything worthwhile about you came from Ileana!
SMASH
We're out of luck, then.
Because I have no idea where she is.

Oh. She got *bored* of you.
FLAP
Anthony! NO!
GRAAA!

LET HIM GO!
Leave him ALONE!
NNAAAH!
SHU
UNK

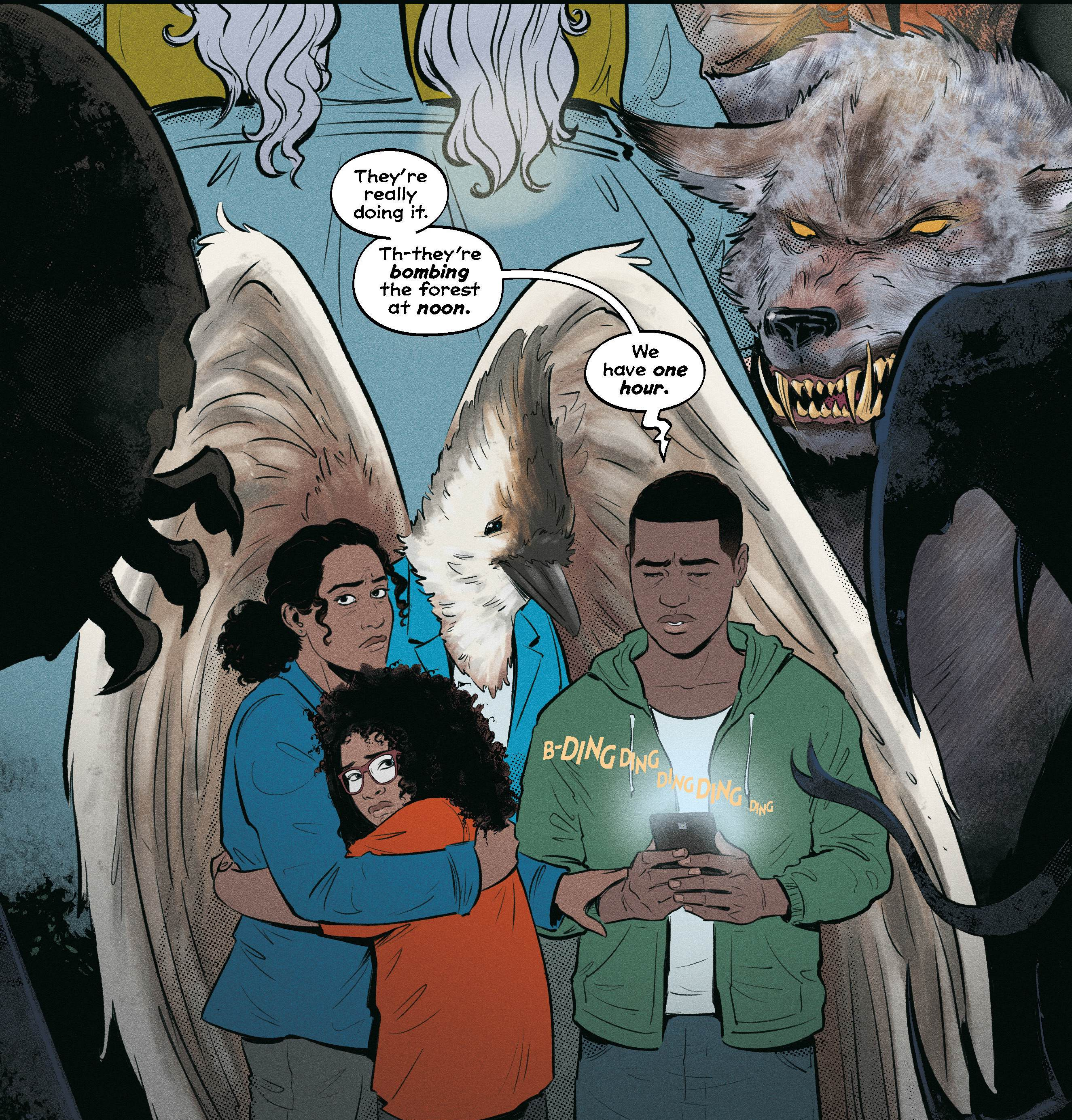
POW
NIKO!
Niko, don't.
HNNH!
HNH!

HUU
Fine.
Whew.
GASP!
B-DING

HUFF
HUFF
HUFF
GRRRR--
SHNK
Uh.
Fam?
B-DING
DIIING
B-DING
Fair is *fair*, Niko.
If I'm *stuck* in this forest forever...

...so are *you.*
SMASH
M-mom?
Havana Good Time!
Tré! *Baby!*

And as for you--
--I will pick my *teeth* with your *bones.*
Wait.

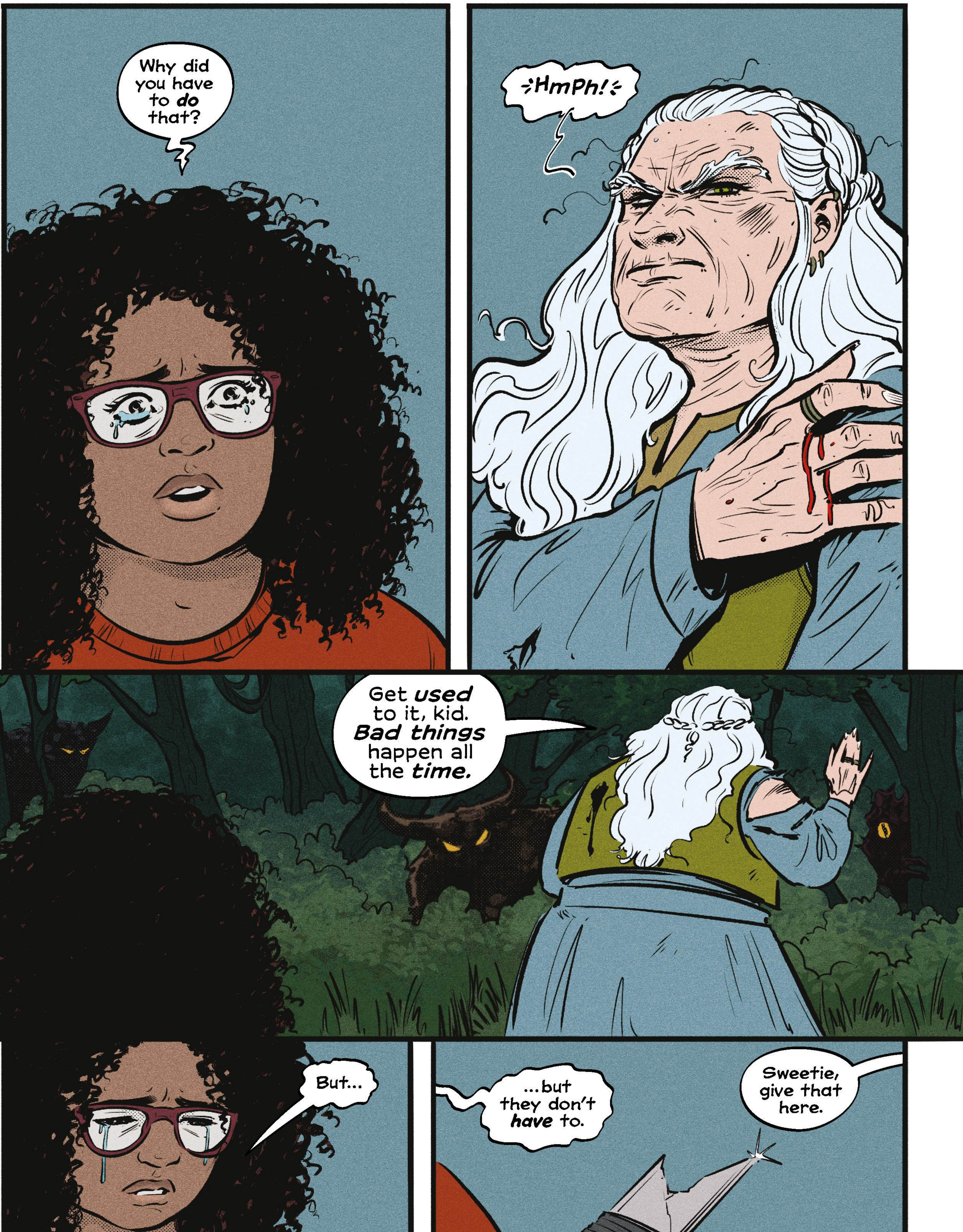

They're really doing it.
Th-they're **bombing** the forest at **noon.**
We have **one hour.**
B-DING DING DING DING DING

6

Skeek
Skeek
NO ENTRY
NO ENTRY
NO ENTRY
WE'RE OPEN
You **wish**, loser!
No, wait, you **gotta** see this--
Teehee!
Ready.
MIKE
JAMAL
MOMO
SARAH
PRIMA
LOVE YOU JACKIE
FOR BUBBE
BOMBS AWAY
ADIOS
DANI
MISS U ERIC
마 사랑해요
NIA
NIGHT NIGHT

Think we'll *get back* in time for the *game?*
BOOM!
Snerk
Na na nana na--
Tsk!
Clear!
04
Na na--
--OOP!
TRIP
KRASH

NO!
Havana Good Time!
Niko...


Why did you have to *do* that?
Hmph!
Get *used* to it, kid. ***Bad things*** happen all the *time.*
But...
...but they don't *have* to.
Sweetie, give that here.

Tré, you need to let Niko **go.**
But I don't ***want*** to.
Sigh
I know. But...
...
They're going to ***firebomb*** the Forest ***in an hour.***

The *children* need to *leave.*
Yours *and* mine.
You're *lying.*
This is the only place my children are *safe.*
Niko tried to *save* your child.

The *lion-bird* child.
The one who came to the city yesterday.
Alina. Her name was *Alina.*
Niko saw that she was just *hungry.*
He tried to get her some *food.*
He *brought* us here because he *knew* it had to stop.
Us killing *your children.* Them killing *us.*
He stopped. Why can't *you?*
Havana Good Time!

FWOOOOSH
D12

You will *never* understand how much I've *lost*--
My *husband!* Her father!
You killed him!
YOU!
So *don't* you *lecture* me about--
One man? Have you ever buried a child, woman?
How about a *dozen?*
AAAARGH!
SHUT UP!
You two being *jerkwads* is not helping anything!
Havana GOOD TIME!
"Jerkwads" is *not* a word we *use* in this house, Tré.

We have *miracles* all around us.
We live in an age of *wonder,* and all we're *doing* is *killing* each other.
Havana Good Time!
I *dreamed* of dragons.
I know I'm not the *only* kid who did, either.
This *used* to be a *park,* you know.

"My husband was one of the park rangers.
"People would drive out from the city to look at nature.
"They'd get ***so excited*** if they saw a deer, or a fox.
"What if...
vVRRsSSsHHHH
"...What if they came to see ***you,*** instead?"
VVRRROOOOAMMM

To watch us *starve?*
No. *Duh.* They'd *pay* to see you and your children.
And then you could buy food.
And *other* stuff.
...
Each side would have to obey *rules.*
I bet people would come from *across* the *country!* Maybe even the *world!*

And the *city* would have an *economy* again.
They'd come for *you.* You'd be the *most important* person in the city!
You *and* your children would be *famous.*
Yeah, *right.*
Of *course* it's not going to be that simple. But isn't it worth a *try?*
People have *never* wanted to do *anything* but hurt us.
Huh. *Imagine* that.
Look. I used to *work* for the Institute. Lots of people *want* to understand, but it's hard when they're *afraid,* and feeling *trapped.*
Mother? *Pleasssse.*

...
None of this *matters* anyway.
Death is coming from *above,* and the only flying child we have is *your* runt.
Hnnh--
We need to *convince* them to *turn* the planes around.
And *what* if that doesssss not *work?*
We will *not* abandon our mother.

Well, *jeez.*
Havana Good Time!
If only we knew someone *badass* enough to punch an airplane.

NO.
I could--
Nope.
VRRRRRRRRRRR
BYE-BYE
AGIC SCUM!
FOR AMY
MISS U BABY
SAYONARA
Robert KXOO
HEADS UP!!
FROM JAMES
UMB'S AWAY
NO MORE MONSTERS
SEE YA
SIOBHAN
TIMMY
DEV
ORDER UP
YES.

Sigh
Once a thing is ***broken,*** child, it can never be fully mended.
I can ***fix*** the sword so it ***looks*** whole, but if you draw it ***again,*** it will shatter.
And when it ***does...***

...it will be *forever.*
...
Wait. I thought--
--*Tré is still--*

If I could *undo* Ileana's curses, I wouldn't *still* be here, would I?
Niko!
There are some things I have to tell you.
What, Tré?
--And then if we don't--
I see.

Fine.
I'll do it.
But I'll *need* another *sword*.
Fine?
Hm.
And I need you *bigger.*
CRRR?
Reach toward your *magic,* and just--
Niko, be *careful*.
It's *okay,* Robin.
I never *expected* to grow old.
No.

You are carrying the *best* of us with you.
You damn well *better* bring her *back*, Niko.
--!
If you *won't* look after your *own* life, I am *asking* you to care for *hers.*
Tré, *don't* let him do anything too stupid.
I will bring Tré home safely. I promise.
Thank you.
You're both *totally gross.*

And thank *you,* Tré, for your *insights.*
What did she *say?*
Nothing.
Keep this *safe* for me?
Sure. But what will *you* use?
Here.
CAW

WHOA!
Well done, Anthony.
NIKO!
Hm?
The plane's *fuel* is in its *wings.*
It lights on fire *real easily.*

FWOOSH
FLAP
FLAP
FLAP
So, uh, we really think Niko can bring down two fighter planes by himself?
With a sword?
He's not by himself.
He's got Tré and Anthony.

Today at noon, the *shadow* over our *city* will be *burned away* at last.

About damn *time,* too.
Two Air National Guard planes will drop enough napalm on the Forest to *destroy* every last *monster* inside it.
No more of magic's *vile perversions* endangering our children!
No, honey, you *have to* keep your beanie on.
Always.
HUMANS ONLY!
The bombers are *five minutes* out, sir.
Clean run so far.
Good.
HUMANS ONLY!
HUMANS ONLY!
HUMANS ONLY!
Now listen to me *carefully,* ladies and gentlemen. We may be a *smaller* city, not as important as the *capital* or the big coastal metropolises.
BUT NOT TODAY.

Today, the entire nation is watching us.
This is bullshit. This is the real perversion.
God save us from the plans of ambitious men.
...
No, Dani, that has to stay on your head.
Not in your mouth.
Because if we are successful at destroying magic, the whole country will follow our lead.
Oh god. I was really bad at this last time.
Mom, you're gonna be fine.
omarforthewin07
Ready?
Yeah.
Okay.
And we're live.
KLIK

LIVE 5k
Hi, everyone.
I'm **Dr. Robin Grant.** I'm the scientist who **discovered** the ley line reversal.
LIVE 10k
I **used** to work for the Institute, until I was **fired** last week--
--So that the **administration** could push through a **vote** to **bomb** the Forest.
The Forest I'm ***sitting in*** at this very moment.
Yeah, the big, bad **Forest.**
LIVE 30k
We have an **agreement** with the **inhabitants** of the Forest.
It's **tentative,** and we're going to need everybody's **help** to make it **work,** but if we can do that--

--the Forest no longer poses us any danger.
In fact, the Forest can *actually* be a tremendous *benefit* for us--
--A *new era* of showing magic who's *boss*, and *making* this city *great* again!
BOIP
BOEEP
It's that scientist you like
BOIP
BOING
BOIP
omg there's people in the Forest look
BEEP
You have to see this
BOING
BOEEP
NO
BOMB
NO M
NOT
UGH
We *can* and *will* wipe out magic!
If they bomb, they'll *kill* her!
--no longer poses us any danger.
--no longer poses us any danger.
--no longer poses us any danger.
--no longer poses us any danger.
--no longer poses us any danger.

LIVE
90k
omarforthewin07
We can have an economy again, one based on sharing our world with magic.
General Rodriguez, there's a problem.
Hm?
Magic that, thanks to a warrior's bravery and a mother's forgiveness, we are finally starting to understand.
Oh!
We're going to try to stop the bombs. We need you to try, too.
The fear, the killing, it can end today.
BOOKS
BOOKS

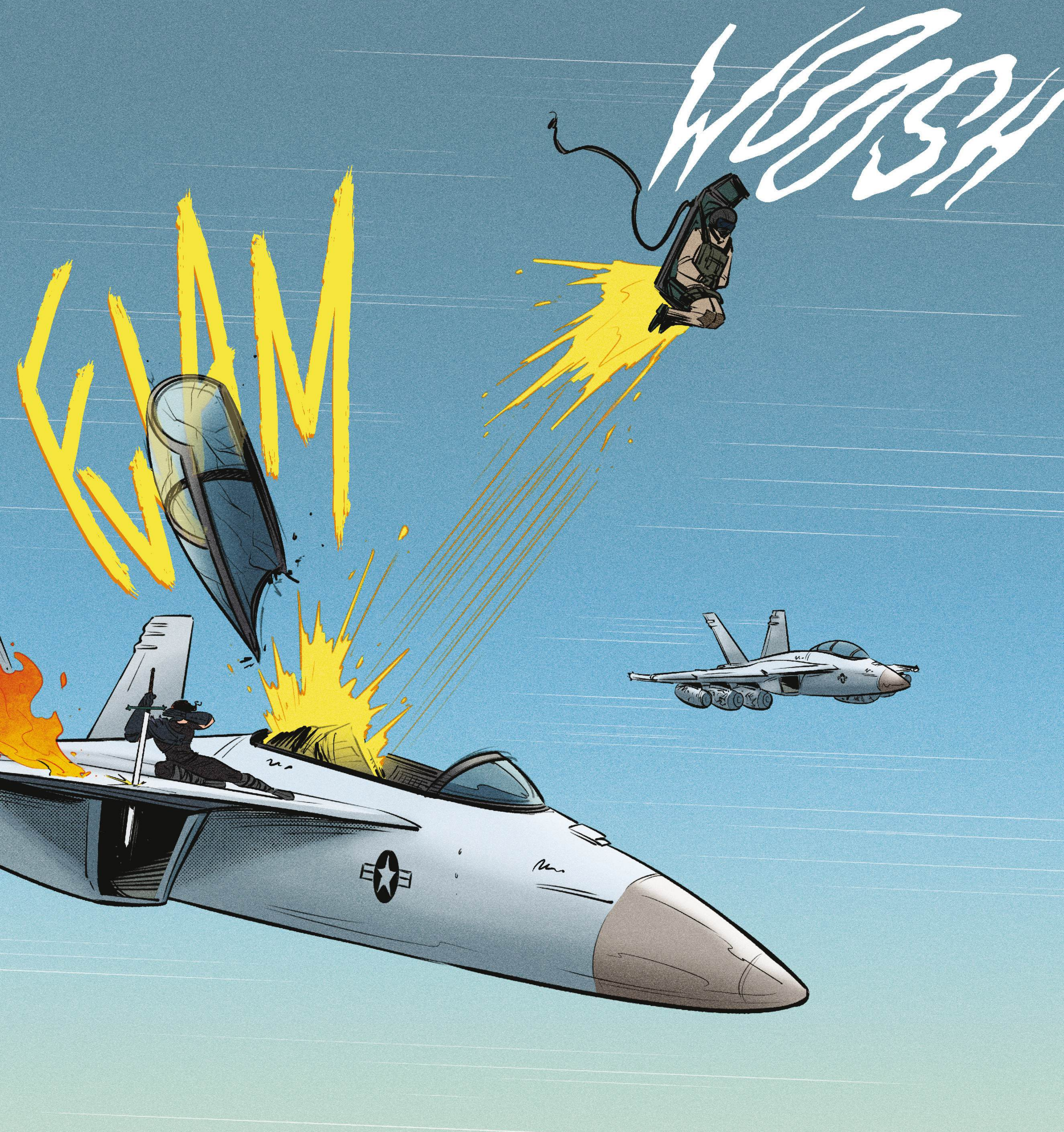
And all we have to do...
...is *this.*
KLIK
Done.
...

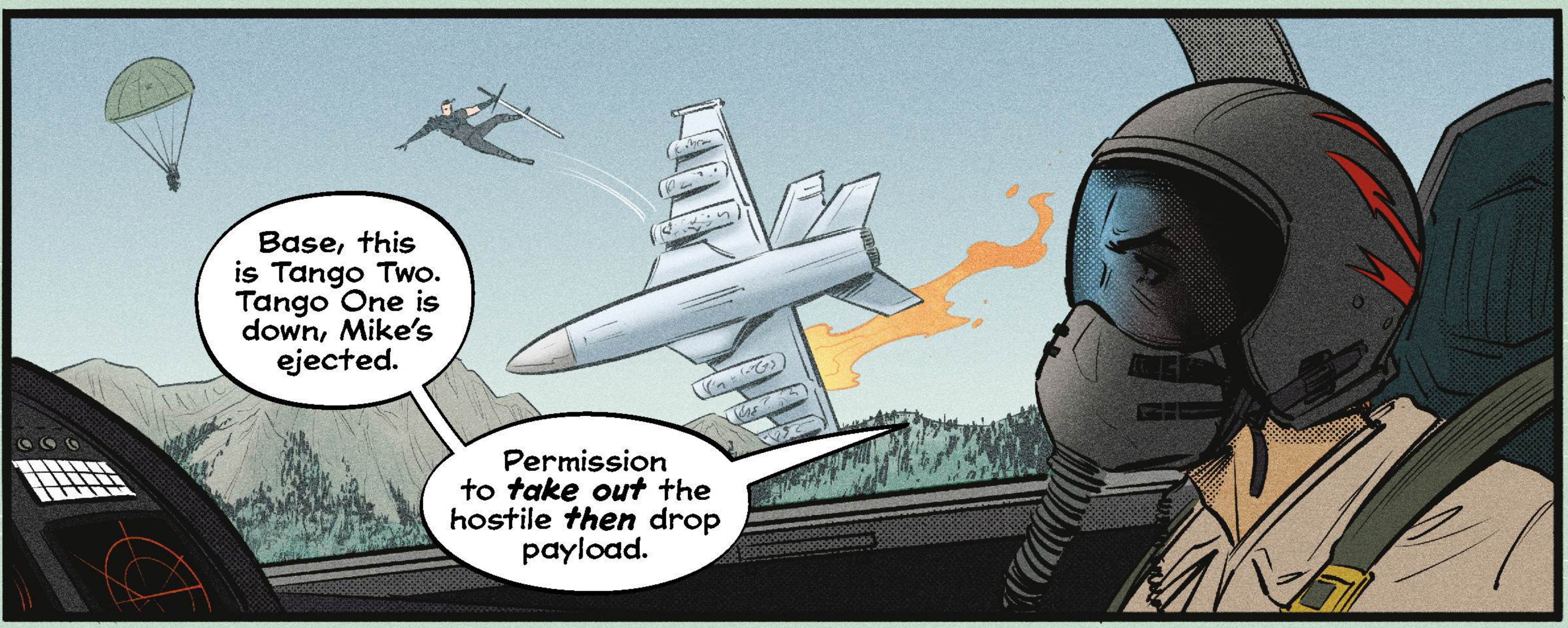
NO! That woman is a fanatic!
A MONSTER LOVER!
You can't believe ANYTHING she says.
I'm worried I've oversimplified things.
It's not going to be easy. We all have so much to get over.
Mom, you were great.
When did you get so grown?
Sigh
Now all I have left to do is sit here and be worried about them.

Base, this is Tango One. Approaching drop zone.
Are we clear to *release?* Over.
--?!
Clear, Tango One. Light 'em up.
WHAM
What the *hell*--

Base, there's a *man* on the *plane*--
NNGH!
SKASH
VROOM

FSSHH
RROOAAR
AAAAH!
FWOOSH
Oh, no way, man. **Nope.**
KLIK
PULL TO EJECT


BLAM
WOOSH


Base, this is Tango Two. Tango One is down, Mike's ejected.
Permission to ***take out*** the hostile ***then*** drop payload.

Negative, Tango Two.
Circle the target area and wait for further orders.
You're not ***screaming*** in my head anymore.
I kind of miss it.
I know. This is almost ***normal*** now. ***What*** is my life?
Sorry, Base. I couldn't ***hear*** that.
Say again. ***Over.***

GRAB
GRAB
What *indeed.*
Do **not** release, Tango T--
KLIK
Oh no, their magic made my **radio** malfunction.
CHRRT!
RRUOOAHRR
Guess I should ***eliminate*** them.

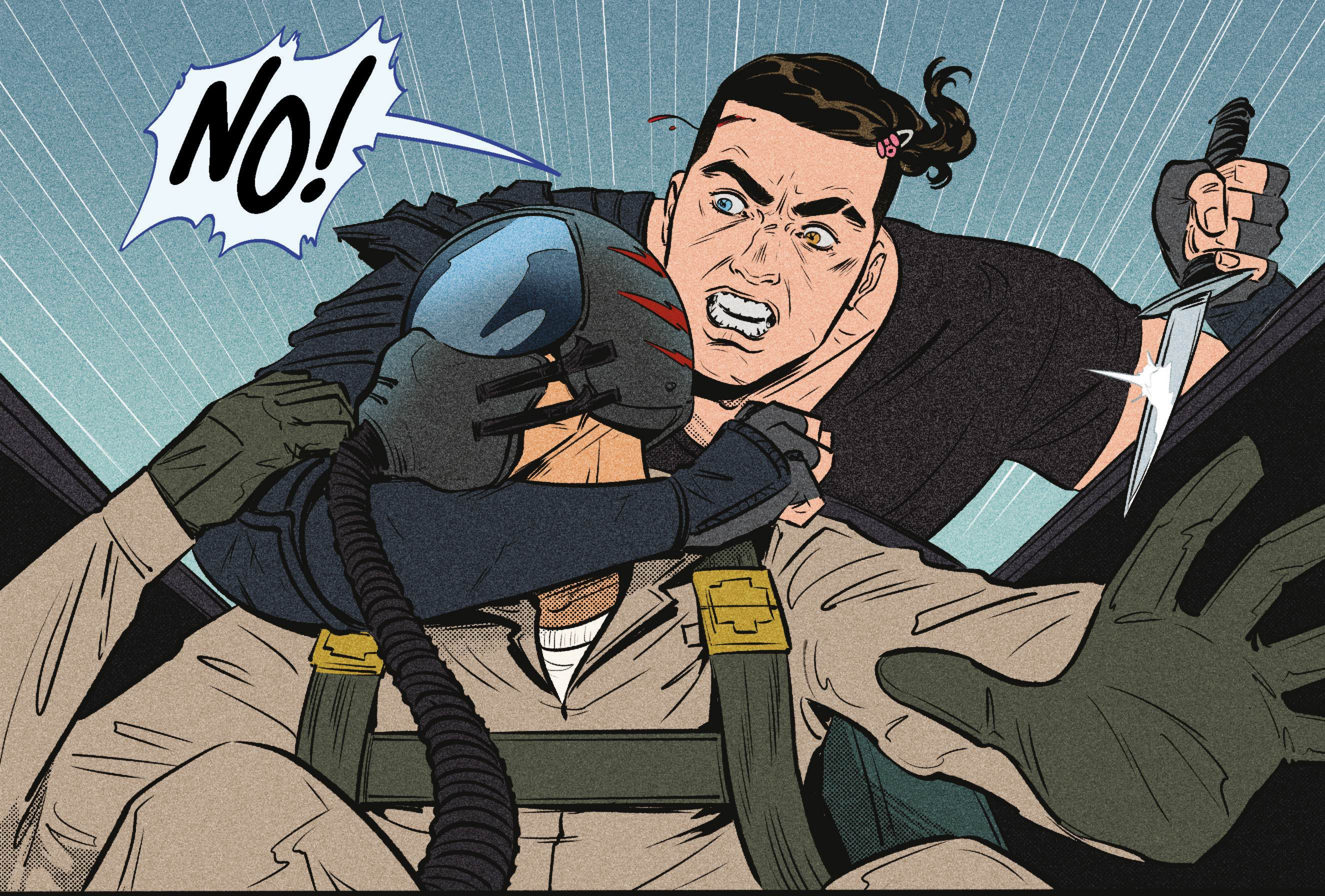
KASHH
AAAAAH!
!
AAAAAH!
On second thought, I *don't* miss the screaming *at all.*
Shit!
RELEASE
KLAK

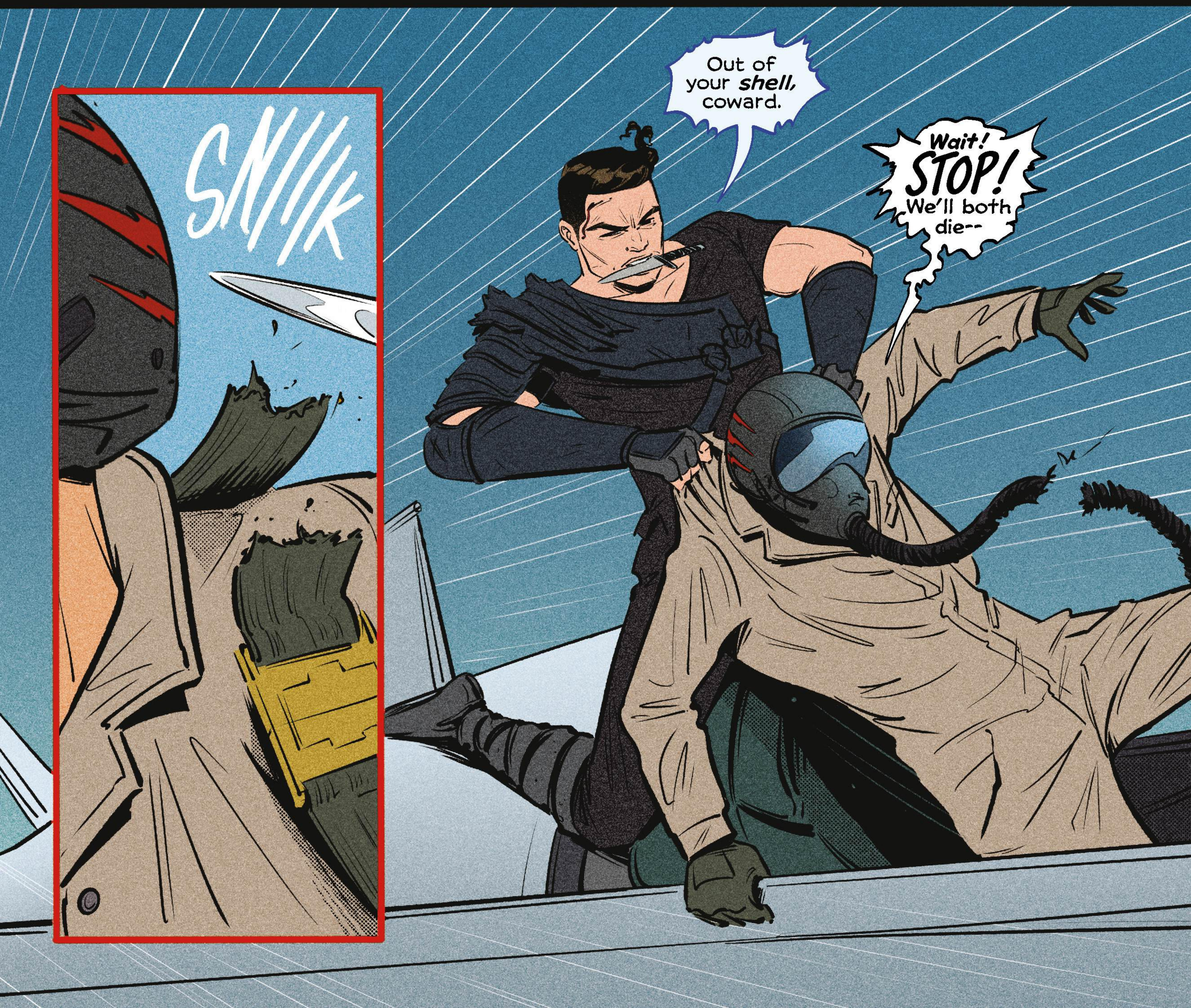
AAAAAAAAAH!!
FWAM
BONK

WAAM

This is for *you*, Sarah.
GRAB
1
OFF
2
VOL
OFF
COMM
SELECT
FLIK
Hnngh--

KROAAAN
Time to *die*, you *freaks.*
1
OFF
2
VOL
OFF
COMM
SELECT
ARM
MANUAL
BOMB
RELEASE


NO!


SNIIK
Out of your *shell,* coward.
Wait! STOP! We'll both die--

GET OFF ME!
FWOOSH
LET ME GOOOOOOOOo!

CAW! CRRR!
Stop fighting! *Trust* me!
NVRRMM
NO WAY! No freak's gonna--

YANK
Ptuuu
KRAAK

BOOM

KKRRKKKK
What was that?
Was it a *bomb?*
Can you see the *Forest?*
One pilot bailed out. We *lost contact* with the other plane after the order to *abort.*
And the *target?*
Still standing.
Thank God.
What's going *on?*
You *really* tried to *bomb* one of your *own* scientists?
Man, this sucks. *You* suck.

Calm *down,* everyone. The *situation* is still evolving. As soon as--
BONK
Idiot!
MORON!
That scientist lady fixed the Forest in about *five minutes.*
He's had a *whole year* and what's he done? *Bupkis.*

BOO!
SHUT UP!
RESIGN!
Institute President? More like IDIOT PRESIDENT!
BOO!
Dr. Grant should be running this place!
You're all WRONG!
Magic is DANGEROUS!
Sigh
You can't believe that woman!
She is a NOBODY!
Better a nobody than a MORON!
RESIGN!
HEY-HO, YOU GOTTA GO!
HEY-HO, YOU GOTTA GO!
Haha! Yes!

FLAP
FLAP
Here.
Give him to me.
You remain the ***craziest*** person I've ***ever*** met, Prince Nicolae.
Not really a prince anymore.
CHURR.

...It's good to have someone from *home,* Niko.
Someone who *under-stands.* Who *remembers.*
Niko! TRÉ!
Hey.
Mother, we found *thisss* in the ash grove.
How are you *feeling?*
M'fine.
We're *both* fine.
?!
WHOMP

He's in *really* bad shape.
We *need* to send him to wherever he goes, so the *magic* can *heal* him.
But *Vesela* said he *won't* be able to come back--
I'm *worried* about *Tré.*
Get his *sword,* Omar.
...
We'll *figure out* how to *lift* your curse, Niko.
But until *then,* you need to *rest.*

Whoa. Now that it's over, I kinda want to do that ***again.***
I mean it was **super scary** too, but Mom, we **fought an airplane!**
Two airplanes!
Wait, WHAT?!
Yeah, ***flyboy,*** you ***did*** just get your ***ass*** handed to you by a ***12-year-old girl.***
Oh lord.
Someone should come ***with*** us to the ***city.*** To ***represent*** the Forest.
There are going to be so many negotiations. Would you?

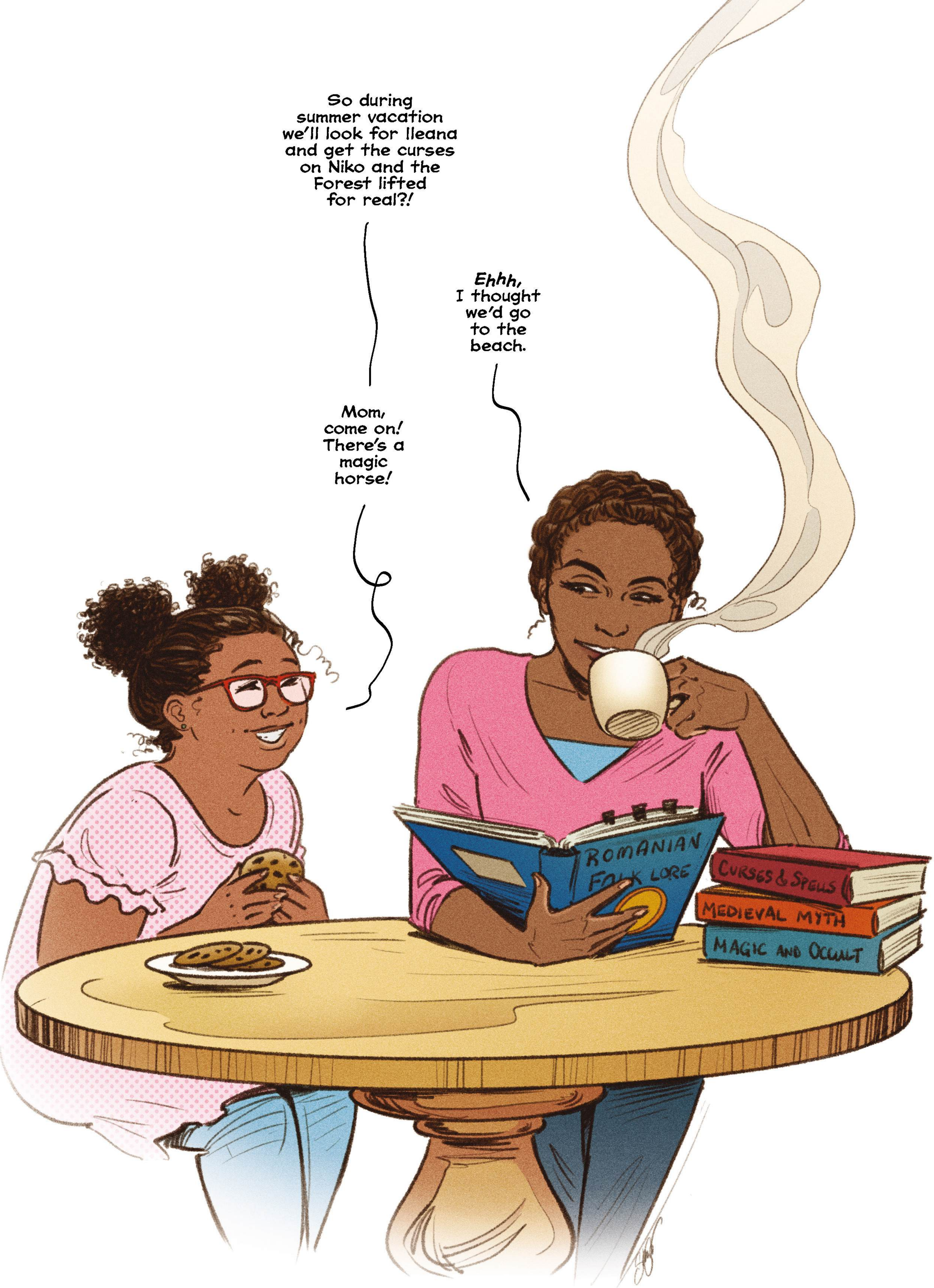
Mother?
Go, Mădălina. You always were a wise child.
You will keep my daughter safe, Dr. Robin Grant.
I promise you, Princess Vesela of the Forest.
Niko can guard her!
Well, first we have to find Niko's scary ex-wife and persuade her to lift his curse.
And we can't do that while someone is at school.
Blah.

Be well...
...friends.
You too.

SKKTT
KRRKT
SNKKT
SNKKT
KRRKT

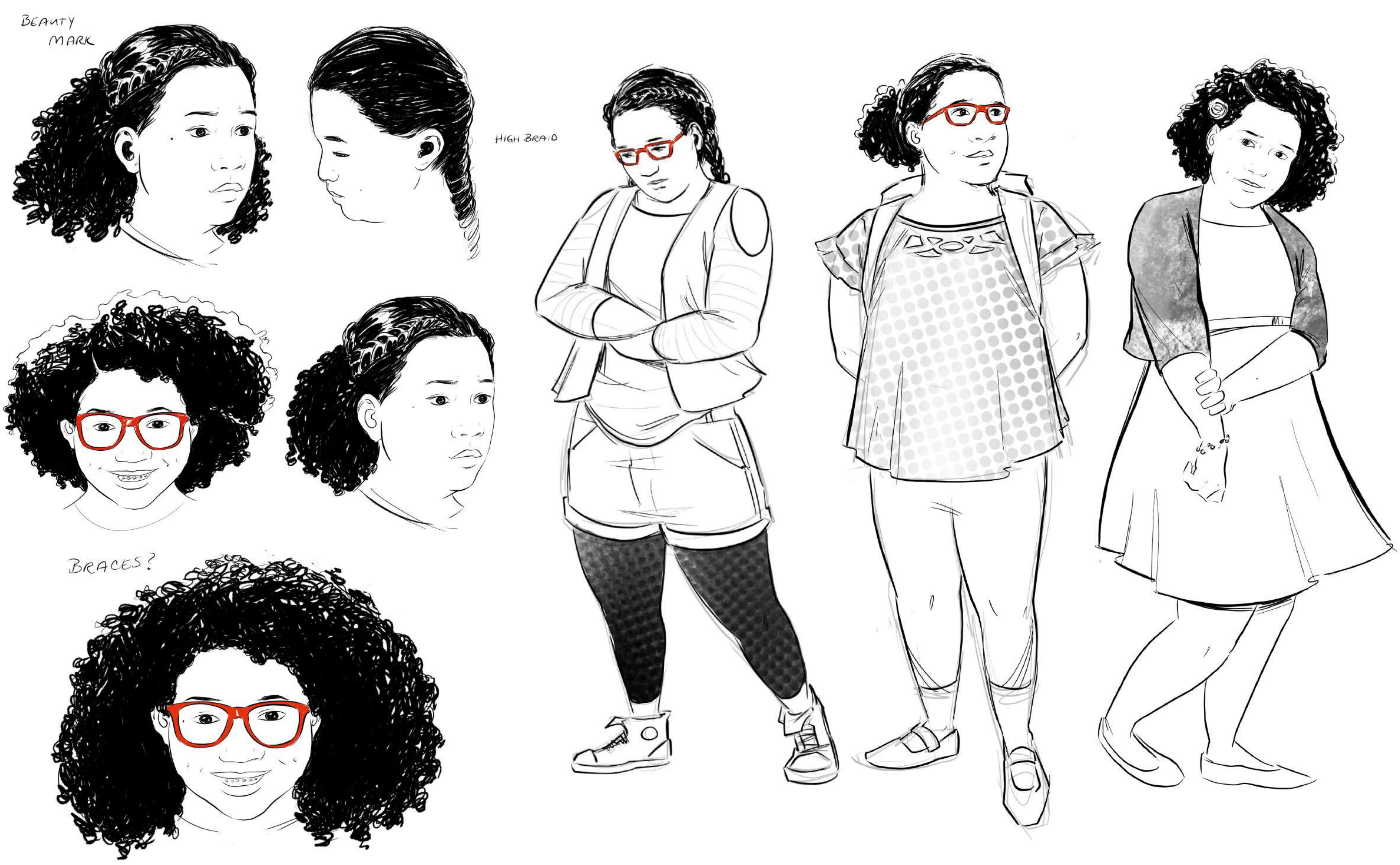
...Oh
Dr. Grant, I presume?
Yes?
We're very ***interested*** in this ***peace*** you mentioned.
Can we ***discuss*** it?

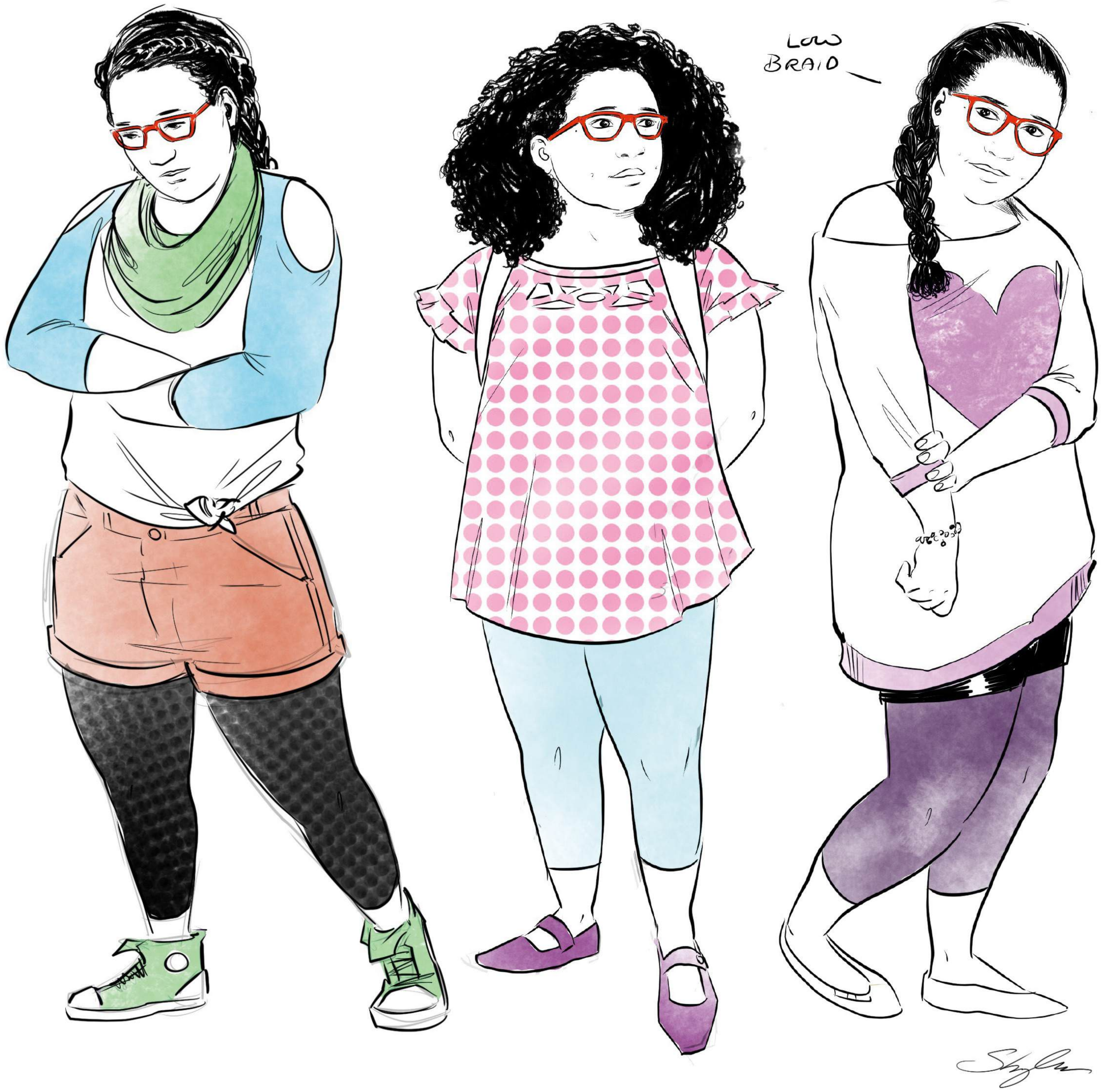
Yes, as long as **Mădălina** here is invited, too.
We have **so much** to talk about.
If I may ask--
--What did you use to bring down my planes?
Um...
Oh, that was **me** and **Niko.**
Niko's the big one with the **sword** that caused a ruckus in the city.
We work **together.**
They certainly do.

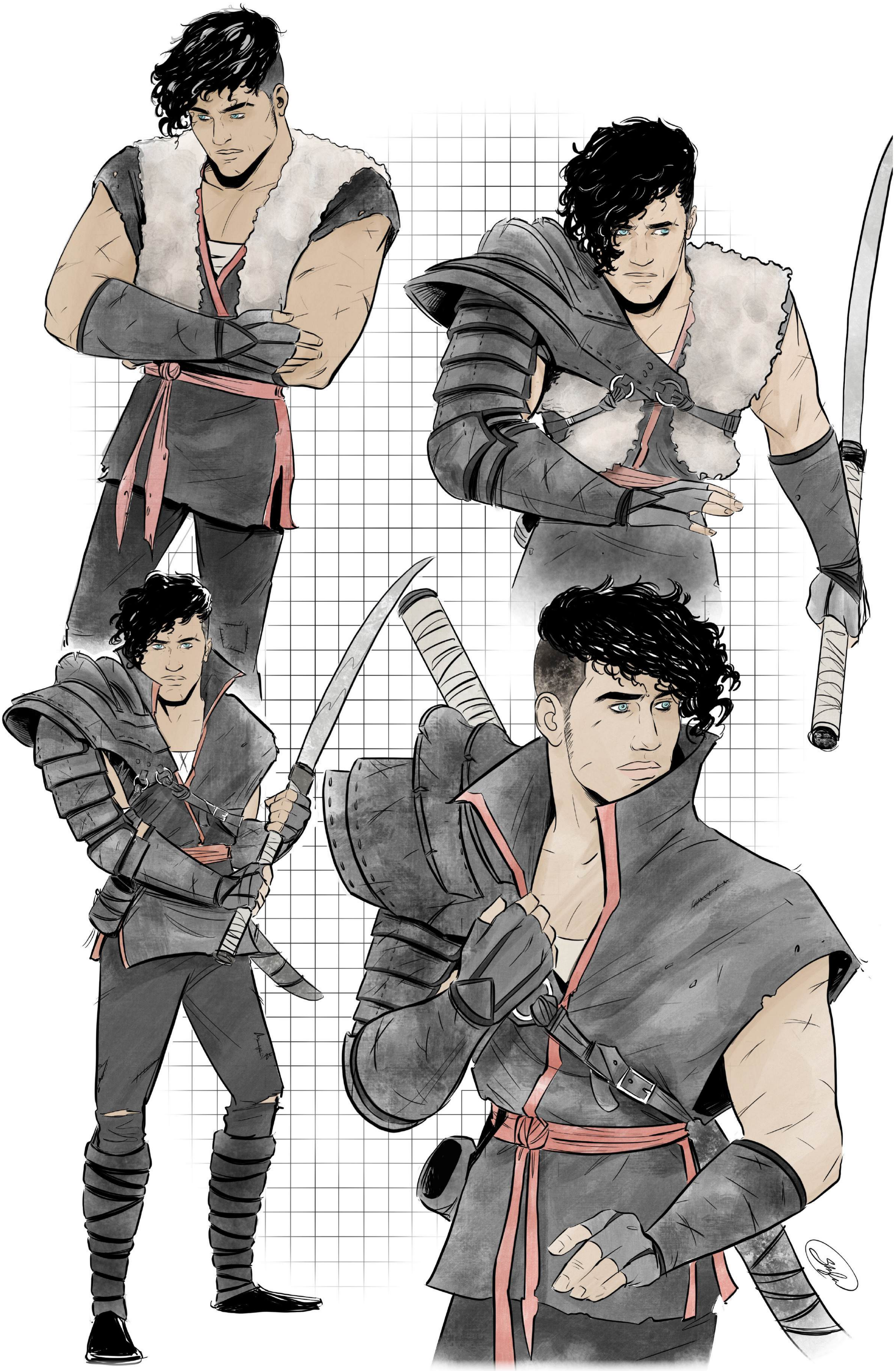

So during summer vacation we'll look for Ileana and get the curses on Niko and the Forest lifted for real?!
Mom, come on! There's a magic horse!
Ehhh, I thought we'd go to the beach.
ROMANIAN FOLK LORE
CURSES & SPELLS
MEDIEVAL MYTH
MAGIC AND OCCULT

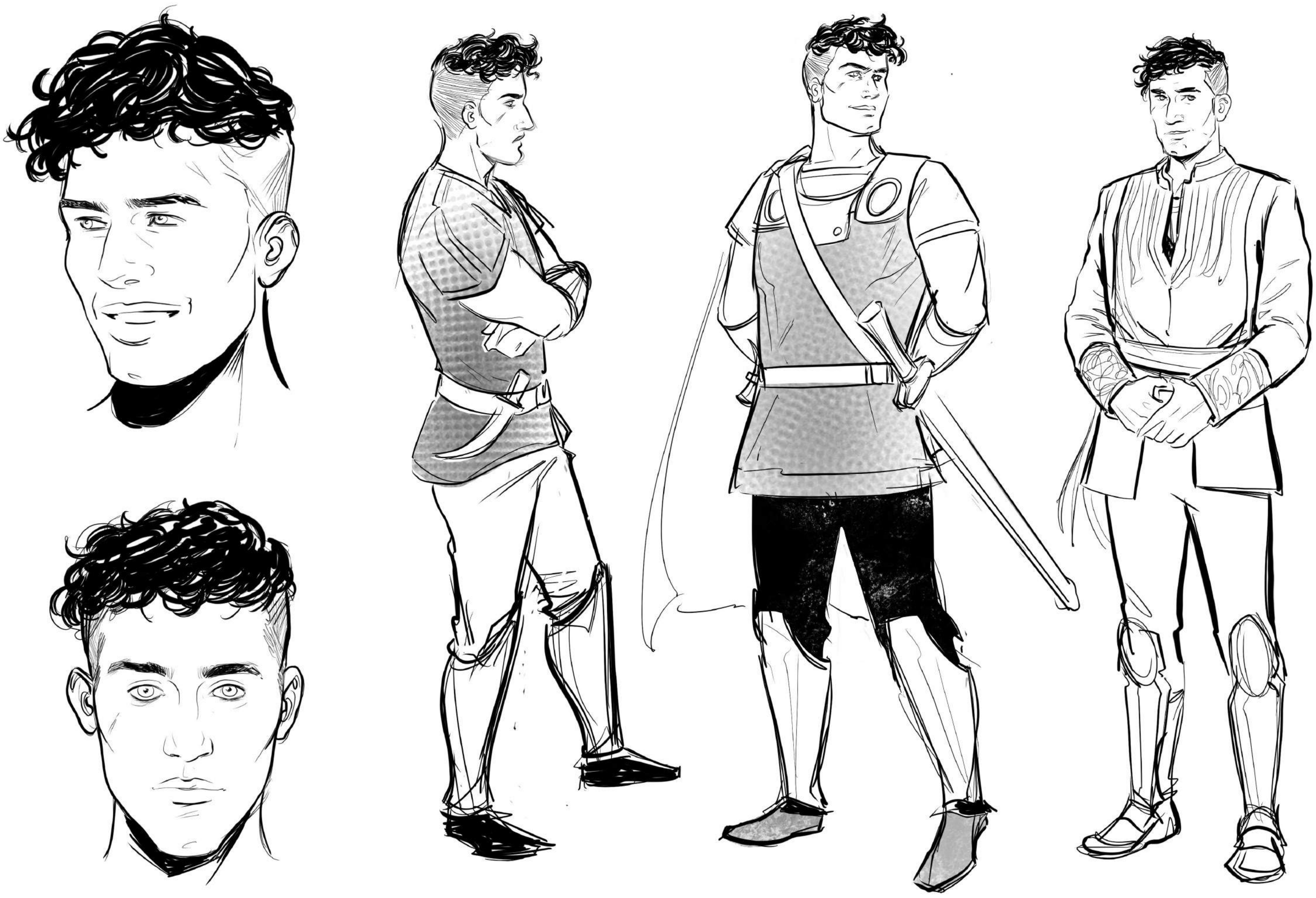
REVERSAL™

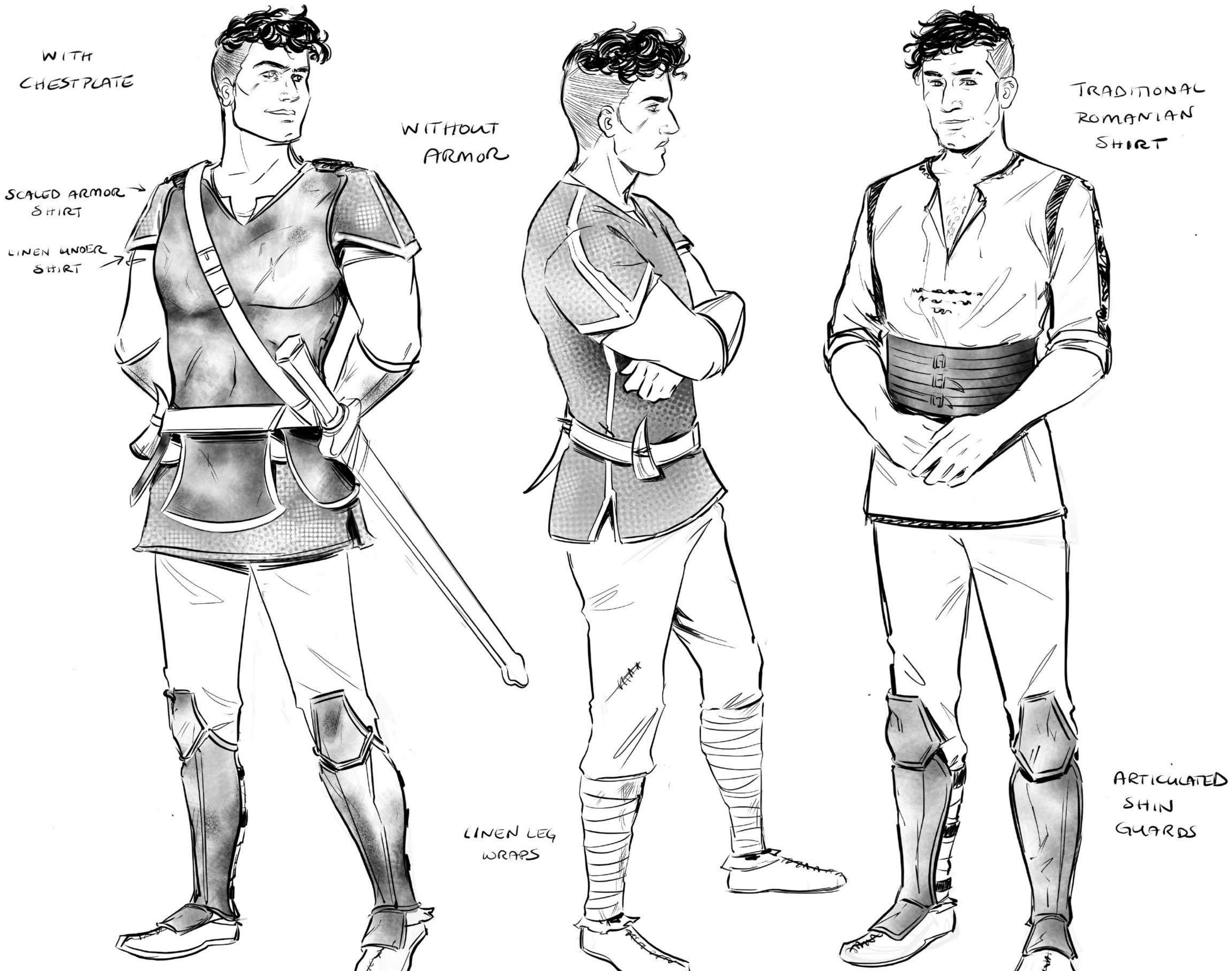
SKETCHBOOK

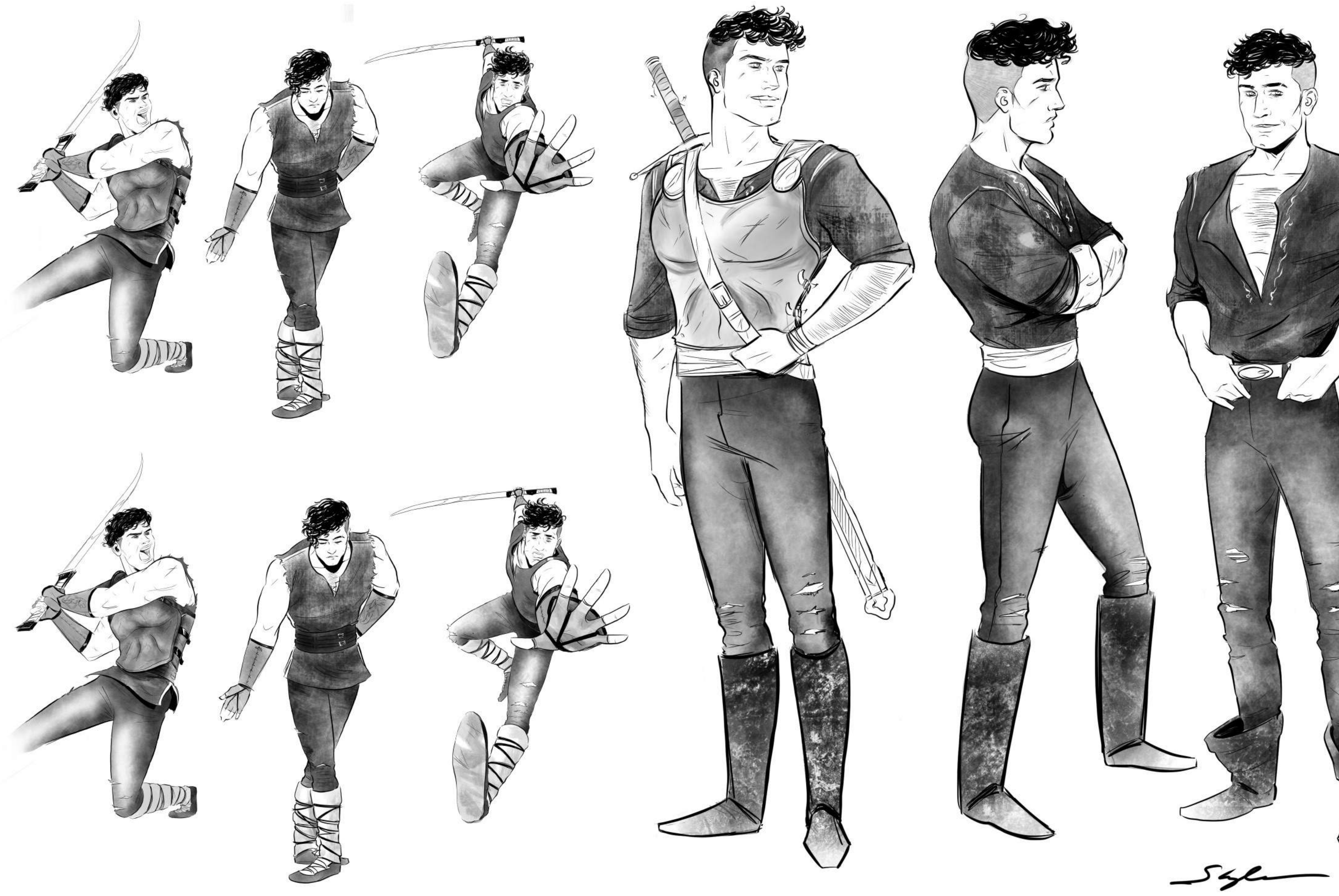

BEAUTY MARK
HIGH BRAID
BRACES?

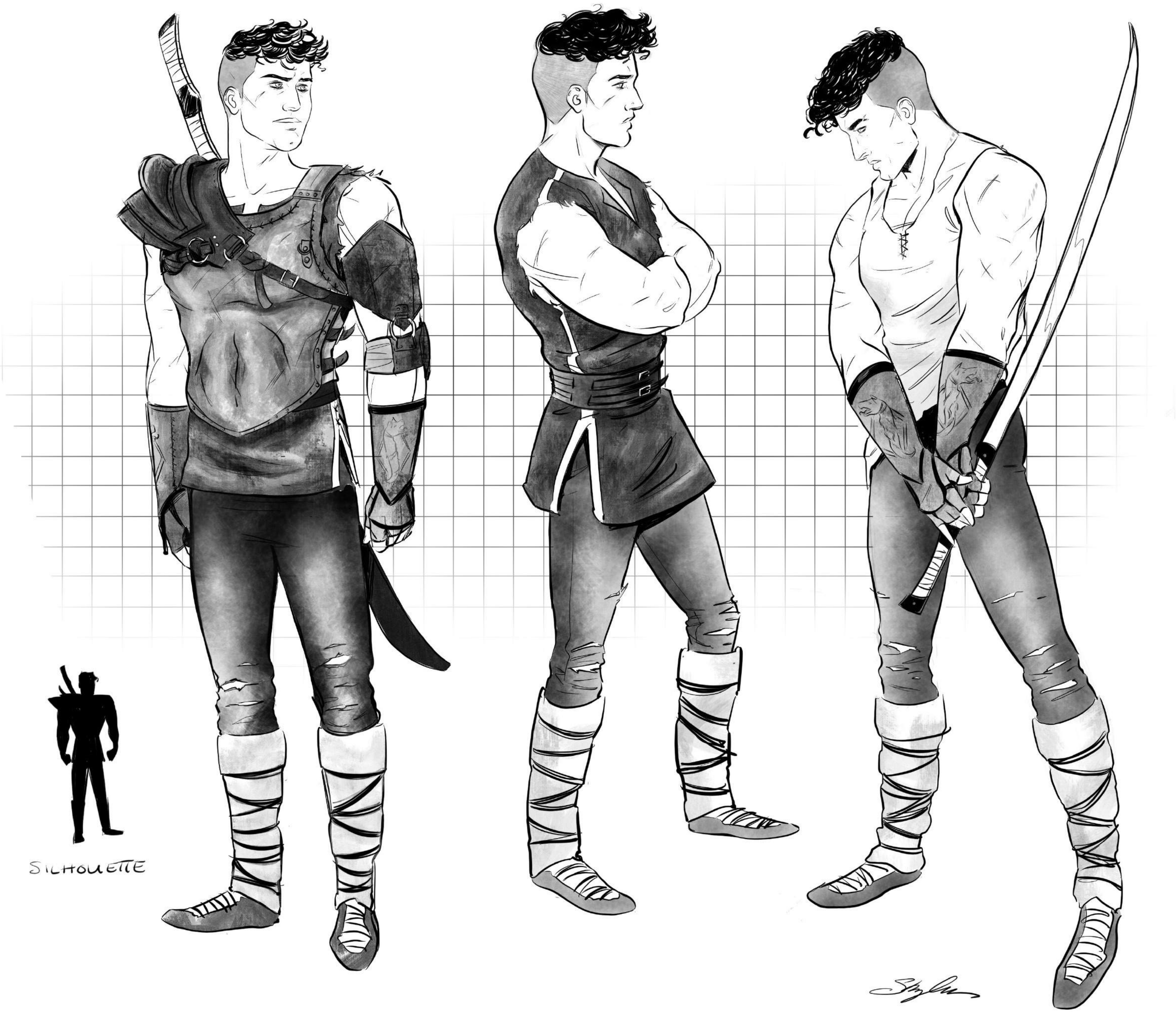

LOW BRAID



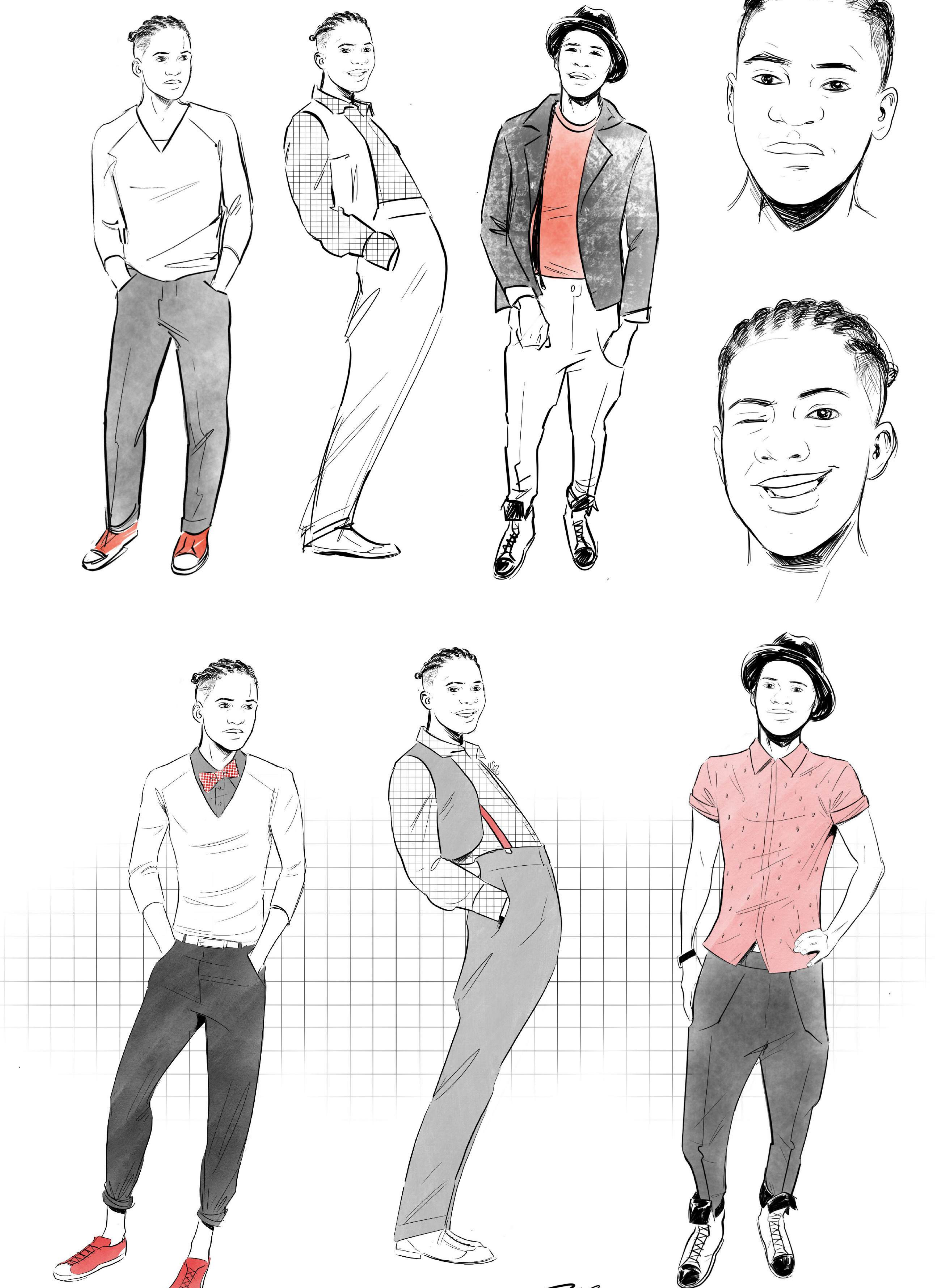


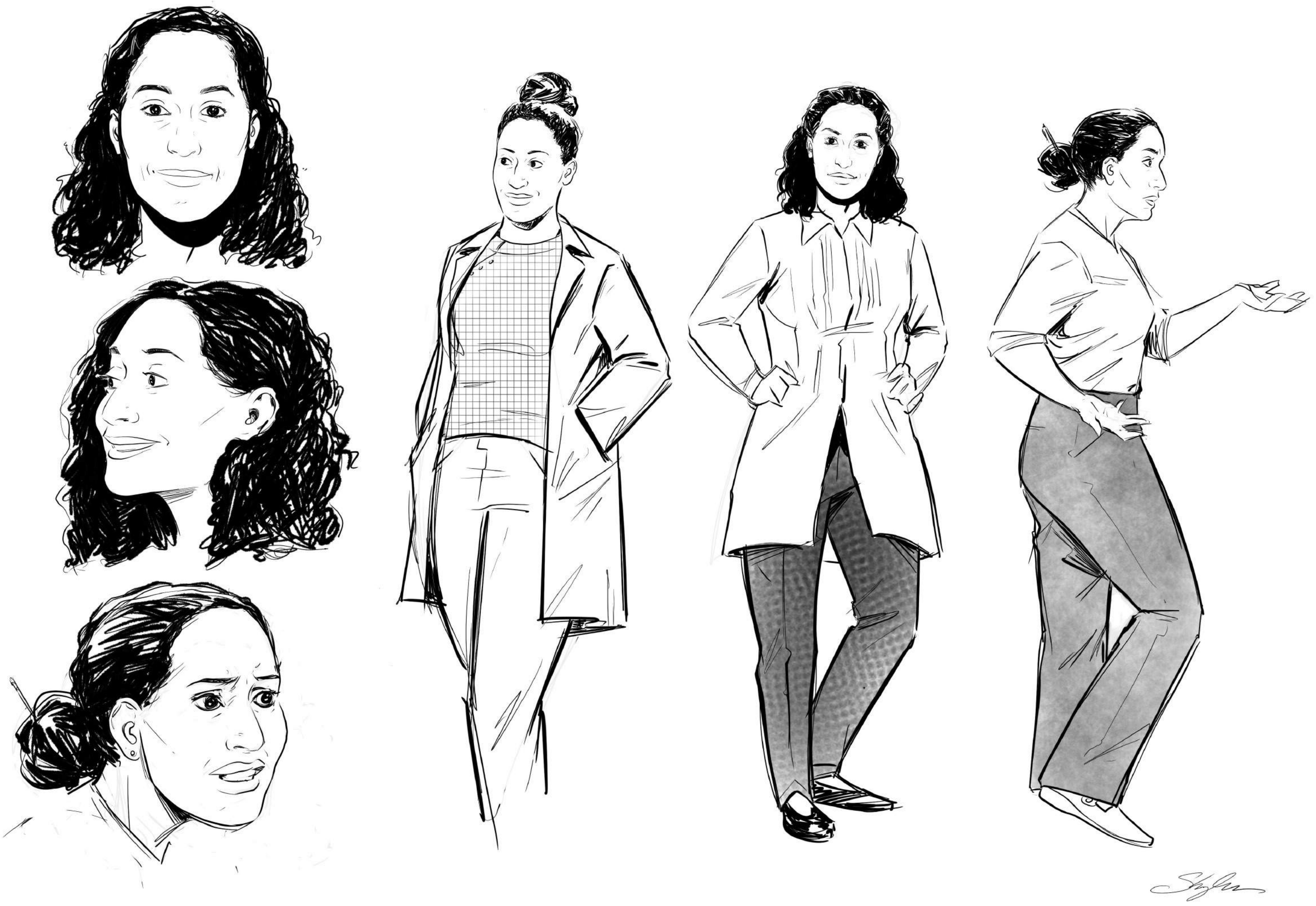

WITH CHESTPLATE
SCALED ARMOR SHIRT
LINEN UNDER SHIRT
WITHOUT ARMOR
TRADITIONAL ROMANIAN SHIRT
LINEN LEG WRAPS
ARTICULATED SHIN GUARDS

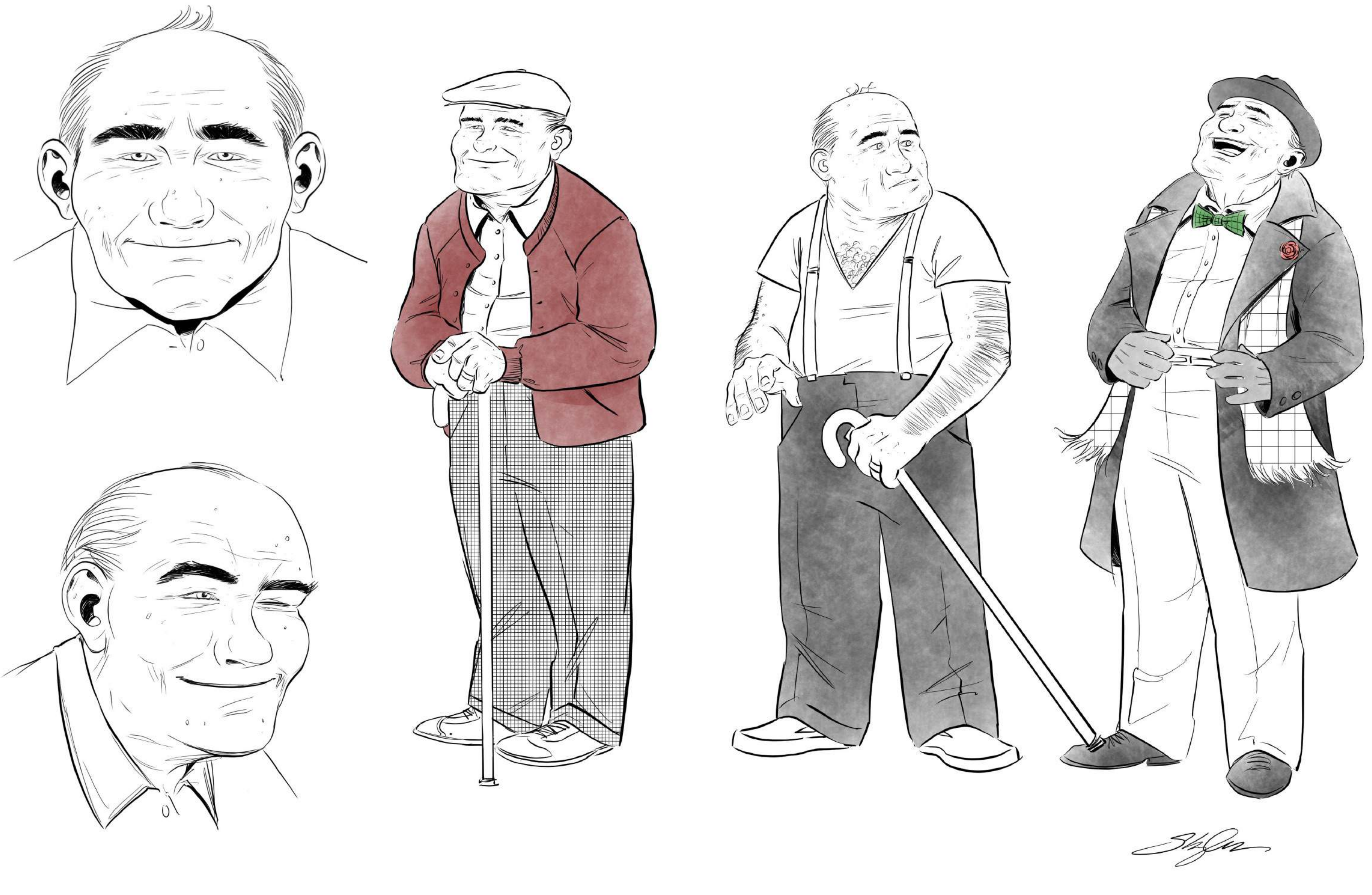



SILHOUETTE

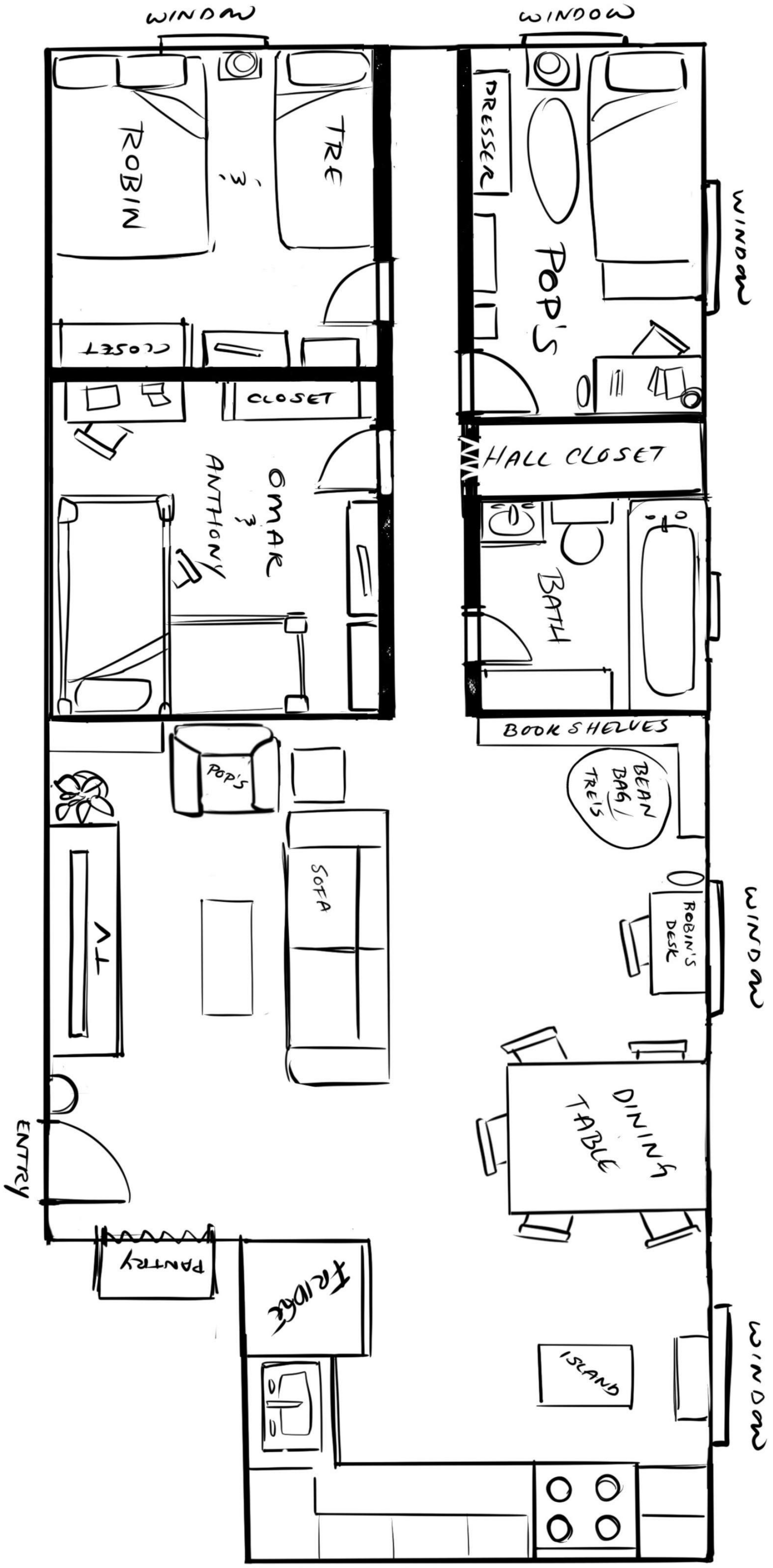
NEW YORK
7
NEW YORK
7
NEW YORK
7

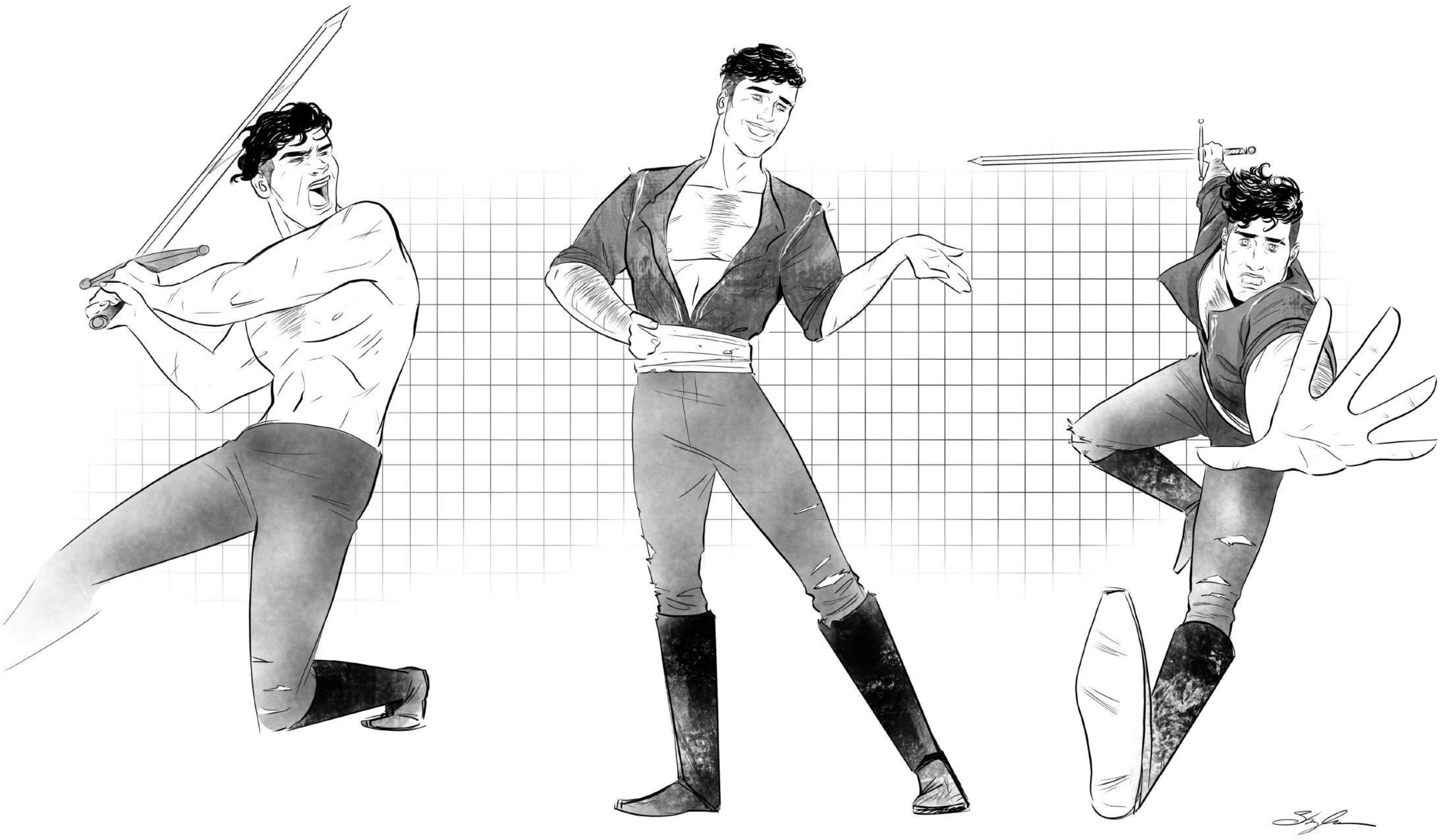


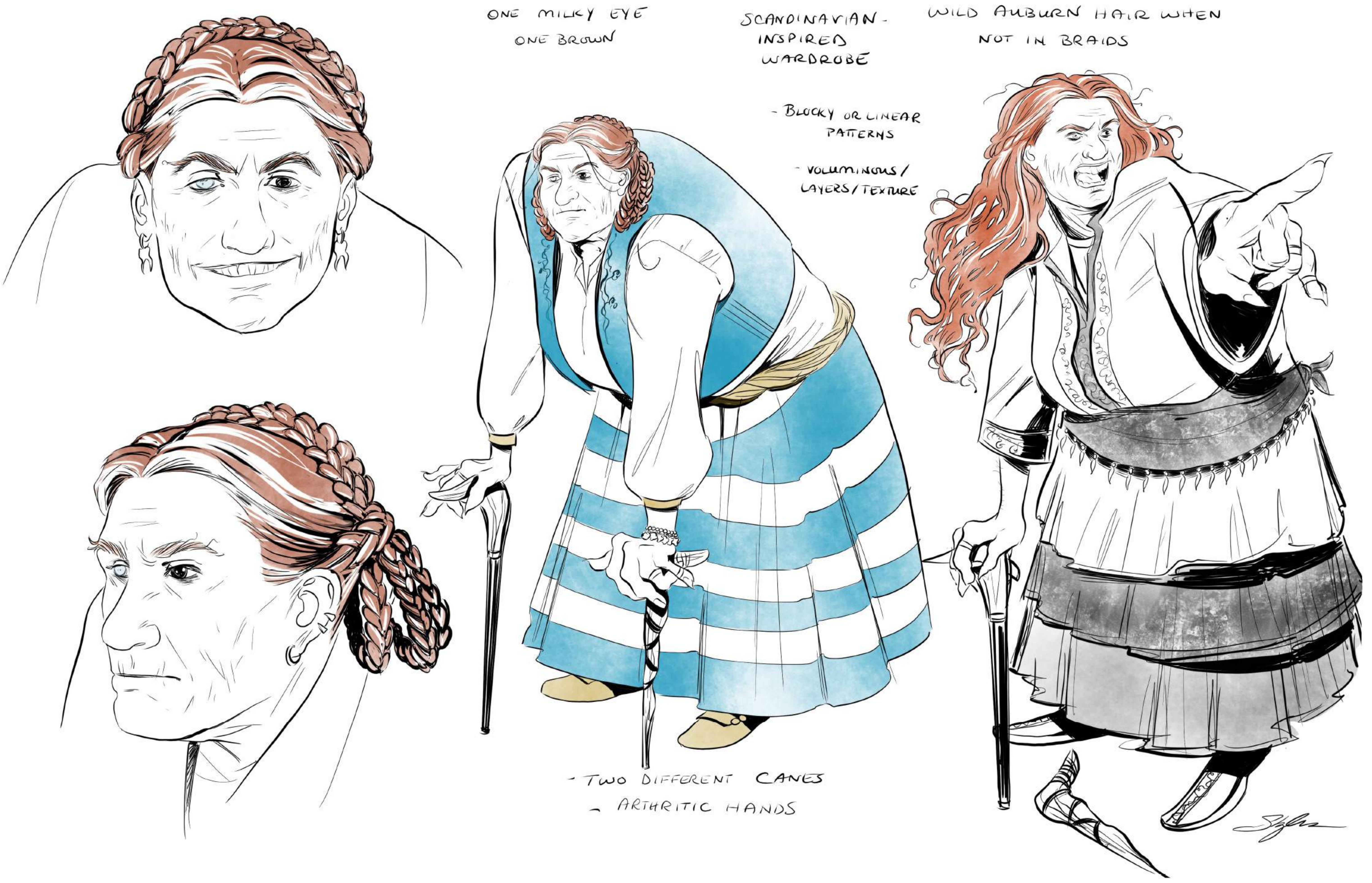


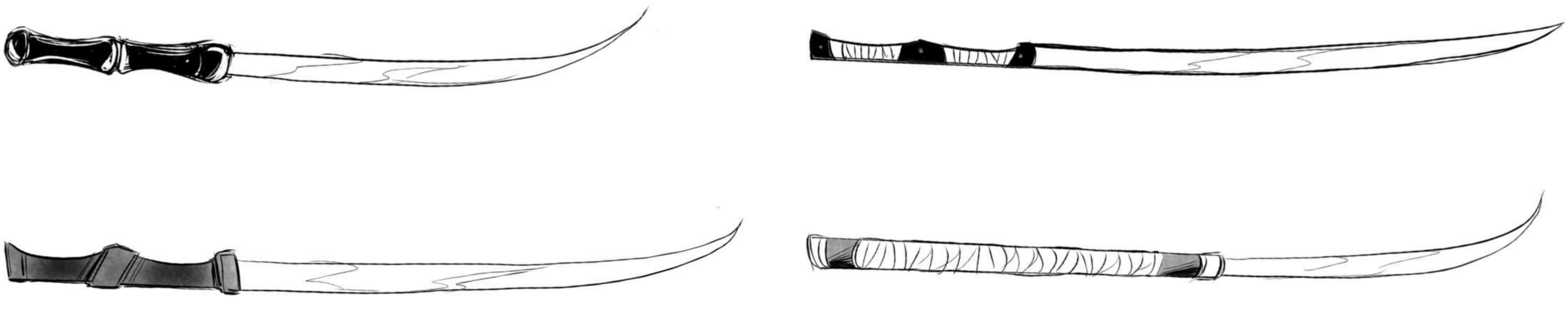


APARTMENT LAYOUT

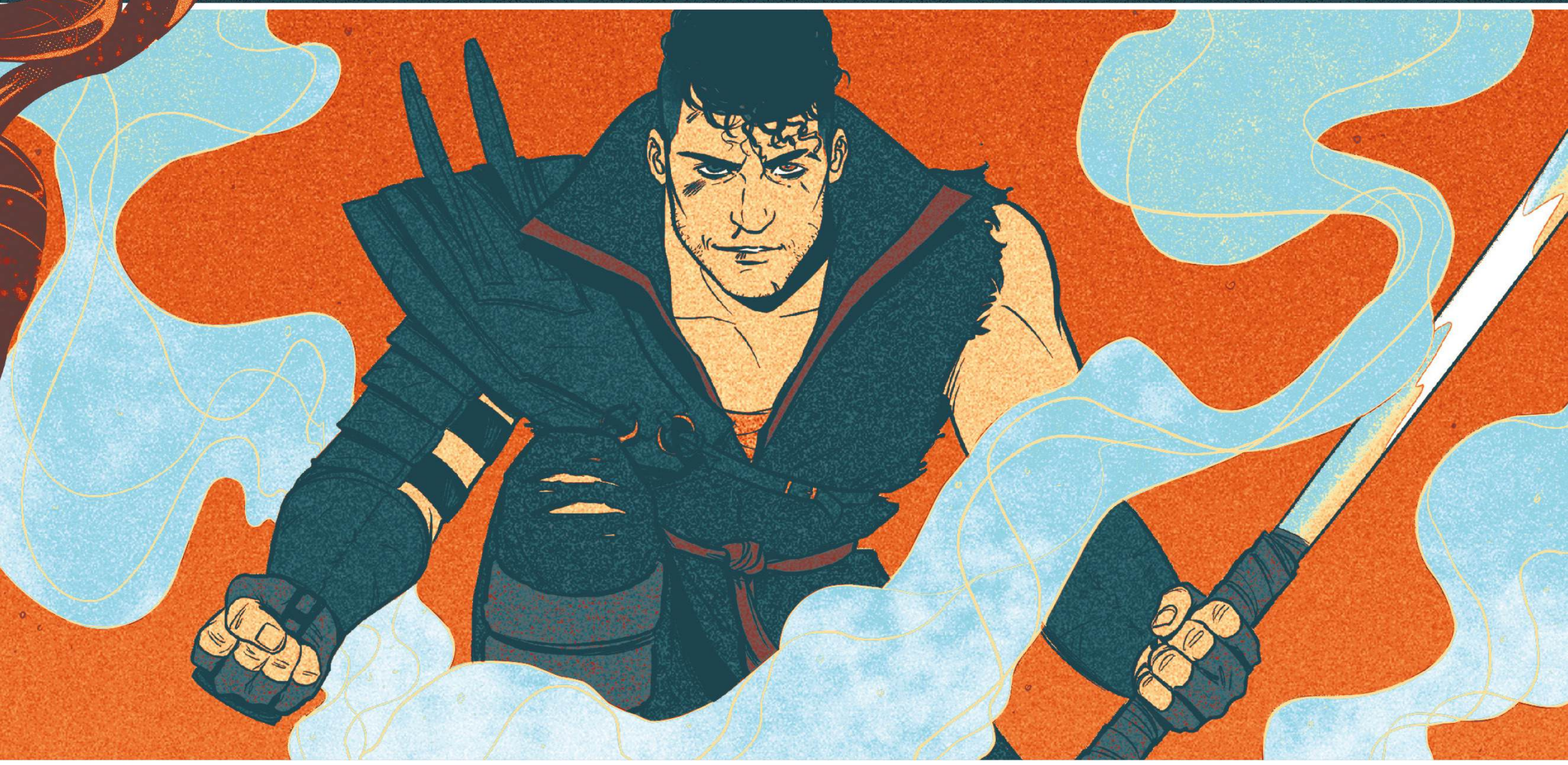

WINDOW
WINDOW
ROBIN
TRE
&
CLOSET
DRESSER
POP'S
WINDOW
CLOSET
OMAR
&
ANTHONY
HALL CLOSET
BATH
BOOK SHELVES
POP'S
BEAN BAG / TRE'S
SOFA
TV
ROBIN'S DESK
WINDOW
DINING TABLE
ENTRY
PANTRY
FRIDGE
ISLAND
WINDOW




ONE MILKY EYE
ONE BROWN
SCANDINAVIAN-
INSPIRED
WARDROBE
WILD AUBURN HAIR WHEN
NOT IN BRAIDS
- BLOCKY OR LINEAR
PATTERNS
- VOLUMINOUS/
LAYERS/TEXTURE
- TWO DIFFERENT CANES
- ARTHRITIC HANDS



COMICS & GRAPHIC NOVELS / FANTASY



REVERSAL™

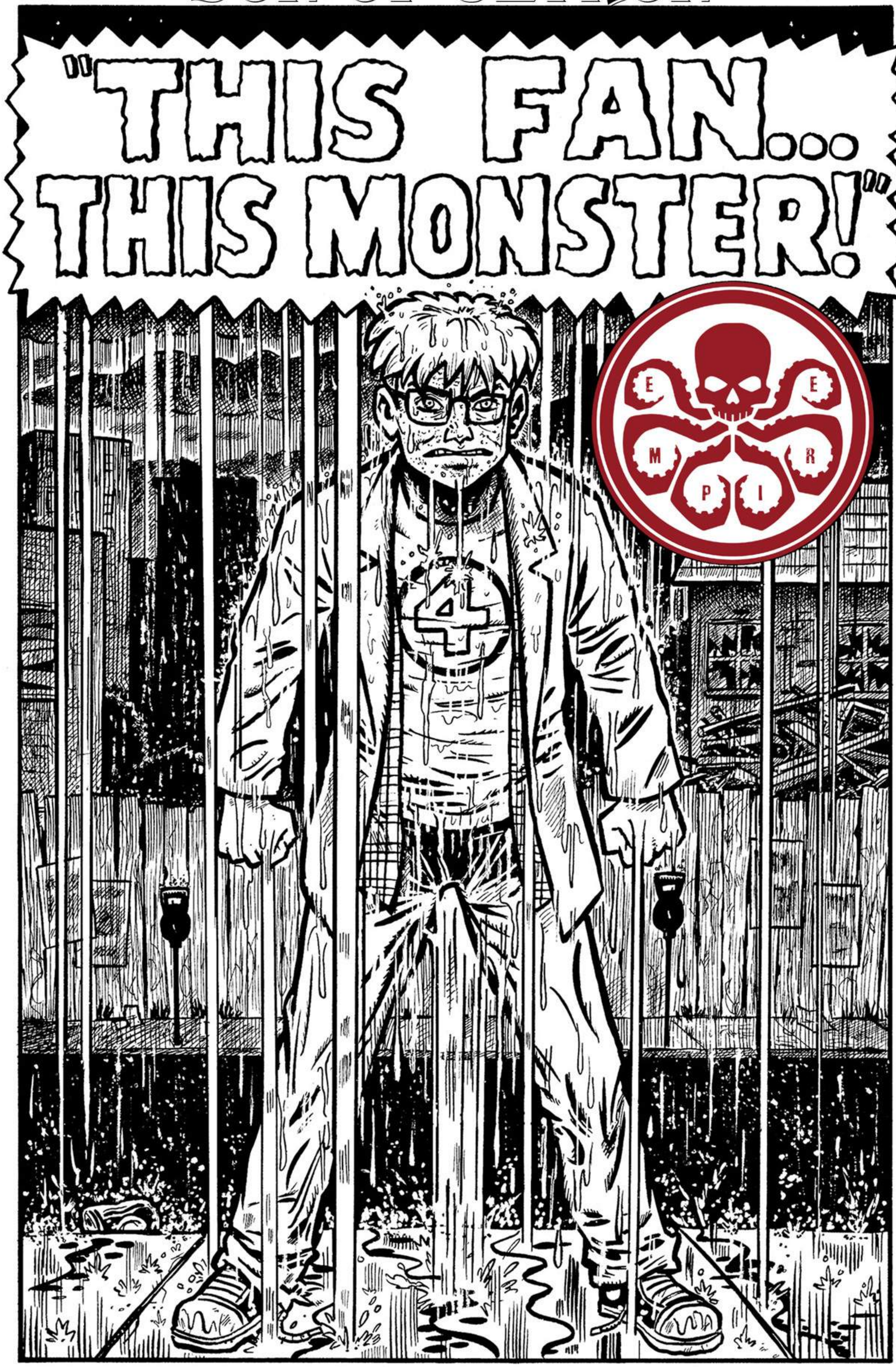
TWO YEARS AGO, MAGIC SUDDENLY AND VIOLENTLY BECAME A THING AGAIN.

Now, Tré Grant is just doing her best to survive sixth grade, which is a little more real than it used to be thanks to the monsters that regularly emerge from the nearby forest to attack her city. But when she discovers a magical artifact that could be the key to lifting the curse on the forest, Tré accidentally becomes the hero the city needs, even if she's not the one it expects.

A contemporary fantasy/action-adventure story from Eisner-nominated writer Alex de Campi and artists Skylar Patridge and Kelly Fitzpatrick with lettering by Hassan Otsmane-Elhaou and cover art by Corey Brickley.

DARK HORSE BOOKS

SON OF ULTRON


"THIS FAN... THIS MONSTER!"

EMPIRE